Face to Face with Great Musicians

Charles D. Isaacson

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FACE TO FACE WITH GREAT MUSICIANS

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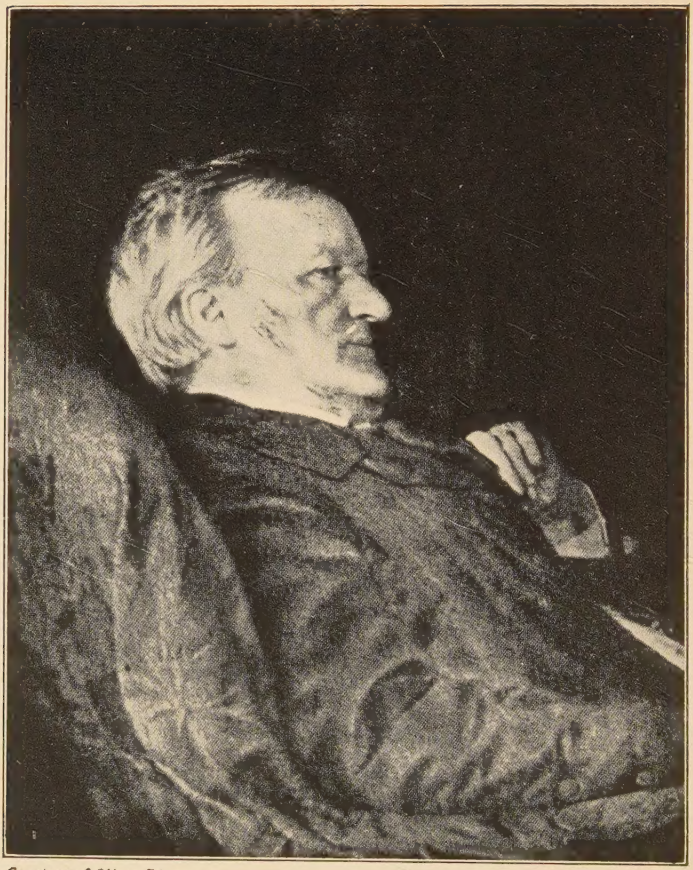

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RICHARD WAGNER

FACE TO FACE WITH GREAT MUSICIANS

BY

CHARLES D. ISAACSON

FOREWORD BY

DR. FRANK CRANE

INTRODUCTION BY

FRANK LA FORGE

SECOND GROUP

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
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TO THE MEMORY OF
A GREAT AND GOOD MAN
MY FATHER
WHO GAVE IMPETUS TO MY LOVE
FOR FINE MUSIC

FOREWORD

CHARLES D. ISAACSON'S work in New York has been unique and invaluable.

He is an original and energetic personality.

If it be true that a genius is one who is capable of being "possessed" by an idea, he is surely a genius.

He loves music. So do we all. But this love in him rises to a sort of religious devotion. He loves music so much, and so unselfishly, that he cannot rest until he has made others love it.

Hence, he is a missionary for music.

At great personal sacrifice of time, energy and money, he has organized popular concerts and brought the best music to the masses.

He has succeeded in securing in this splendid work the coöperation of the greatest artists of this country and of the world.

They have caught fire at his flame, and have gladly joined in his efforts to offer the beauty and inspiration of their talents to hundreds of thousands who otherwise could not have received this opportunity.

His free concerts have become an institution. They have kindled ambition in many an aspiring

youth, and brought light and happiness to vast numbers.

If music has a mission, if it be an element of culture, surely what is most needed is to bring the very best music to those multitudes who need it most.

"Culture," said Joubert, "is anything that can bring the satisfactions of life over from the body to the mind."

If that be true, certainly music is entitled to a place in the highest rank in the list of the instruments of culture.

And certainly one who carries this advantage into the reach of the people has done much to improve the character-quality of the community.

In this, as in his earlier book, Mr. Isaacson emphasizes the human element in music.

He shows that the great masters were human beings, as we.

We can touch and feel them.

After reading such a book, the music of the masters must be nearer to us, a more comprehensible and usable thing.

For those who are familiar with the history of music, the volume will be a delight, a book to read, and to dip into again and again.

For the many young people who are studying music it will be an invaluable aid to understanding, and a wonderful inspiration to more intelligent and sympathetic work.

FRANK CRANE

PREFACE

PROBABLY no publication or periodical has ever again had the popularity or the degree of circulation of Volume One, Number One. Hence the accession of any work to a second appearance is among the wonders of the world.

It is, therefore, with a feeling of a species of awe that I behold this modest venture of my conception again mounting the public rostrum. In the first step I had been moved to put my little vignettes into permanent form by the kindly assurance of many of my good friends among the musicians and my audiences. Now, in a different spirit, I am going forward, because I am sensible of a duty to complete the structure I have begun.

However faulty the technique of the author, there seems to me now no doubt that the thing I have tried to do in setting down these little face to face meetings was right and necessary. All creators of art may be made utterly human to those who would gain the largest share of enjoyment from their creations. Indeed, to the newcomers to fine art, I look upon the process of humanizing the masters as essential to an understanding.

I chose for my initial sphere of endeavor the world of music, for its field of importance is widening with the last years into the lives of the millions, instead of the few. In music I find practically a virgin land; my brother writers have scarcely kissed the fringe of the sward. In music I am most nearly at home . . . but it is not of music only that I speak in the few words that make up this brief preface. What is spoken here may be taken for painting, sculpture, literature. The same theory applies equally.

When one glances down the right-hand side of a program at a concert, there are names that even to the regular connoisseurs are little more than ink on paper. The words carry no mystic meaning, the letters do not instantly flash the picture of a living creature of flesh and blood. I am an ardent admirer of the reproducing machines, but I miss the smile and the electric personality of the interpreter himself. When I find a new name in the list of composers, I say: "Wait! First show me his picture and tell me his story." Half the joy in Schubert's songs is Schubert himself. I hear him pleading, I see him bashfully hiding his tears. Not to know him were calamitous! Do I overstate?

Then reverse this process and obliterate from your memory the vivid personalities you know. For experiment, fasten your thoughts upon a man or woman you know well. Think of his characteristics, the cast of features, the rhythm of his walk, the tone

of voice, his idiosyncrasies, his whims, his noble habits, his ambitions, the unforgettable incidents of your contact with him. Now blot all this knowledge from your memory. Think just of his name—along with his work. What does the name mean? Nothing!

Take another view of the subject. Let me assume you are a new reader—that my other volume has not had the privilege of your companionship. You have known something of Beethoven—you have seen his portrait, learned that he was deaf, heard some romantic story of his "Moonlight Sonata." Have these facts not been of value to you, in your attitude toward Beethoven's music and your comprehension of its import? The purists laugh at me. They would take their art unadulterated without exoteric matter. They scoff at my attempts to interpret music and musicians. Let them have a good time. I am writing these sentences aboard a train en route to Florida, where I am to address a convention of music clubs. When I get to Tampa, I shall deliver my speech, yes; but, unlike the purists, I shall first learn everything I can about Tampa!

I am making a plea, then, for biography—all of it, not for this little venture, though there be a hundred volumes before I put up my pen. The only virtue I seek to claim for my chapters is that I have spent the years studying and gathering the facts, and perhaps have saved the effort for my readers. But I would be a happier man if I knew, dear reader, that

you had been inspired to read more of the authentic biographies after scanning my words. Those of you who have told me of the impetus which these faltering efforts have given your music interests do not dream how much confidence you have given me to go forward.

The present book of the series takes up a company of thirty vital figures in music history, arranged in such a way as to provide a nice sense of contrasts, without forgetting to encompass the old and the new days, the opera and the symphonic world, the classic and the semi-classic. This time I have chosen, as well, a great singer, the maker of the pianoforte, and a man I love more than any other who ever lived.

Again I desire to express my gratitude to the New York *Globe* for permission to reprint the series (written originally for its columns); also to thank the following individuals for their kindly advice and aid: John C. Freund, editor of *Musical America;* Bruce Bliven of the *Globe;* C. E. Williams of *Physical Culture Magazine;* O. G. Sonneck of the *Musical Quarterly;* Otto H. Kahn; Charles M. Schwab; Adolph Lewisohn; Alexander Lambert; Rose Roden; and A. M. Sweyd.

Charles D. Isaacson

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Foreword, by Dr. Frank Crane . .	vii
	Preface	ix
	Introduction, by Frank LaForge . .	xv
I.	Face to Face with Wagner . . .	1
II.	Face to Face with Rossini . . .	14
III.	Face to Face with Berlioz . . .	24
IV.	Face to Face with Patti	36
V.	Face to Face with César Franck .	48
VI.	Face to Face with John Field . .	59
VII.	Face to Face with Donizetti . .	68
VIII.	Face to Face with Auber . . .	80
IX.	Face to Face with Schubert . . .	92
X.	Face to Face with Balfe . . .	106
XI.	Face to Face with Abt	118
XII.	Face to Face with Rubinstein . .	129
XIII.	Face to Face with Cristofori . .	141
XIV.	Face to Face with Stephen Foster .	151
XV.	Face to Face with Grieg	163
XVI.	Face to Face with Palestrina . .	178
XVII.	Face to Face with Gounod . . .	190
XVIII.	Face to Face with Coucy . . .	202

CHAPTER		PAGE
XIX.	Face to Face with Spohr	212
XX.	Face to Face with Purcell . . .	228
XXI.	Face to Face with the Scarlattis .	230
XXII.	Face to Face with Tschaikowsky .	251
XXIII.	Face to Face with Garcia . . .	265
XXIV.	Face to Face with Dvorak . . .	275
XXV.	Face to Face with Bizet	286
XXVI.	Face to Face with Moussorgsky .	298
XXVII.	Face to Face with Lalo	311
XXVIII.	Face to Face with Weber . . .	323
XXIX.	Face to Face with M. N. I. . .	340
XXX.	Face to Face with Mozart . . .	350

opera of Wagner and Weber to the songs of Stephen Foster and Abt and the comic opera of Balfe. There is rare farce in the chapters on Field and Rossini, fierce tragedy in that on Tschaikowsky, romantic drama in that on Coucy, melodrama in those on Garcia and Weber, splendid character drawing in those on Auber, Field, Donizetti, Mozart, Berlioz, and especially in that on Moussorgsky.

Bizet's chapter is as perfect a confession of the struggle of inspiration against drab necessity as has ever been written.

The Wagner chapter actually sets in brief form all the controversies of the master's life—the charges and his defense.

There is a sweet tendency, a Barriesque calm in the Lalo, Schubert, Abt, Franck chapters, with the latter giving an exceptional study of the pipe organ.

The development of the pianoforte is told dramatically in the Cristofori chapter and again touched upon in the discussion of the Scarlattis.

The real "close-up" is that of Patti, a friend of the Isaacson family, but the tenderest bit is Isaacson's tribute to his father in "M. N. I."

A very catholic volume, full of information, presenting great humans as they must have been in the flesh. In short, they bring us face to face with those great lights who seem so remote from the world in which we live.

FRANK LA FORGE

FACE TO FACE WITH GREAT MUSICIANS

I

FACE TO FACE WITH WAGNER

1813-1883

HE sat there in his big chair, writing on his opera "Parsifal." On his head lolled the velvet cap, falling over to one side. The spectacles were set firmly on the firm nose. The forehead rose high, intellectual. The hair was bushy at the back, a little suggestion of beard was on the side of his face. The cleft chin was forward and prominent, stubborn, obstinate. How I caught the impression I don't know, but something about the face made me think of an old seaman, who has known the roughest tides. The eyes were deep and heavy lines were on the forehead from frowning and thinking, with high hills drawn over the eyes. The cheeks were marked ferociously. The mouth always seemed to say, "No quarter." An old captain I knew at Gloucester looked exactly like him. But there was an indolence about his clothes that sug-

gested the very opposite character. Soft collar, rich cravat, velvet jacket, slippers, a scent of perfume—the setting of a sensualist—an Oriental.

The room in which he sat was hung with heavy draperies, the floors were covered with thick rugs. The whole place was adorned with lavish colors, depicting the voluptuary at his worst.

As he sat writing his music, the lips going tighter, the jaws were working incessantly, grinding, grinding, as if he were intent upon pounding an enemy to powder. He was a little man, but one didn't realize it, so straight did he hold himself. He passed a theme and paused a moment, drumming his pen on the table. As he awaited his inspiration, he rubbed his hands against a silken cloth, doing it with evident physical pleasure, his eyes closing a trifle at the effect of the sensation.

From the distance some voices rose, and presently a group of musicians trooped into the room. They were excited—the King had sent them—and here was pretty Miss Sedgwick, a new singer for the Master to hear.

"Good," said Wagner, "let me hear you."

"Shall I?" the young woman asked hesitantly.

Then she went to the piano and sang from the love music of "Isolde." It was a lovely voice. In the joy of hearing, Wagner actually stood on his head on the couch; then he ran under the piano like an overwrought animal and roared like a stag. "It is beautiful. Lovely! Ecstatic!"

The young woman shrank back. Impetuously Wagner rushed to her, threw his arms about her and kissed her, threw his arms about the man who brought her and thanked him.

"You are frightened, my lady. Do not be like that. Come here. I will do something for you. I like to be excited when I stand in the presence of beautiful singing. I like to give vent to my feelings. We should be permitted to do that. Why stand always like mummies? I know that many people have resented my freedom. It isn't dignified, doing these things. Once at a picnic in the country, with my one-time friend Nietzsche, I climbed a tree. He couldn't get over it—he hasn't got over it yet, and he's dead. Good-by, now, my friends. Don't come again though——" His voice had changed from the happy, cheerful spirit of fun to a mean, insulting tone. "Don't come again when I'm working. You should know better."

"But, master, I thought you would like us. We meant no harm. We——"

"Be silent—don't you see that I'm anxious to work? Don't come again, any of you."

Richard Wagner, this was Richard Wagner! Impetuous, generous, boyish, moody, cruel, unfeeling, a lexicon of moods in a moment. So we saw him, in the outer man. Left alone, he returned to his desk, rubbed his hands with scented powder and prepared to resume his writing. As we watched him, it seemed as if the place darkened.

And this was what we heard coming from the nowhere—the creatures of Wagner's life.

"Ah! My little Richard," sounded the sweet voice of an old woman. The man quickly put down the pen and jumped to his feet.

"Ah! Liebes Mutterchen, you have come; it is so many years since I saw you. Are you proud of me? Ah! And here is dear friend Geyer, my almost father, who used to lift me on his knees and show me the theater. Much has happened to your Richard since we saw each other last. I have had many fights. But my creed is winning out, my disciples are many, my devoted followers are legion."

"Disciples, followers, eh," came a cutting voice. "Egotistic to the last, eh, Wagner? The sun shines for you alone. Your disciples, your followers! The whole world exists only for you. If some one liked your music, he was a good man. If some one didn't like you and your ideas, he was paid to keep you down."

"Yes, they were paid, the miserable scoundrels, writing against my ideas. I have preached my doctrines to the world, and the world has been a long time coming to realize me. For six years I had to stop my music to preach my ideas—to make them understand. They have hated me, these jealous fools. They have been either paid to keep me down or they have been Jews."

"Oh, he's at it again about the Jew," came a laughing chorus.

"You and the Jews would make a good comedy. Hating the Jews and feeding out of their hands. Meyerbeer was all right as long as you needed him, but afterwards you reviled him. Leah David you were in love with when you were a lad, but when she wouldn't have you, then she was only a Jewess and you were attracted by her dog, so you said. You escaped imprisonment through a Jew's aid—everywhere you turned, they helped you. An anti-Semite in theory, and a pro-Semite in practice. That essay of yours will not be forgotten. How ungrateful, Wagner, you have been, accepting help from Jews at every turn in your life, at every great moment, and then talking as you have done against them. Aren't you ashamed?"

"No, I am not!" shouted Wagner, roaring like a lion and tearing up and down the room. "I hate them. They are incapable of doing big things. They are constitutionally wrong. I hate them all. I hate . . ."

"Yes, that is the word," put in a mournful voice, "you hate. You hate everybody, every creed—Christian, freethinker, except as it fits your selfish moods to like them. You have been a lover and a hater of Germany. What you are you don't know yourself. Nobody knows. You are nothing, you are changeable as the west wind, Wagner."

"That is true," responded the man. "I have no feelings, truly, about anything except my music. That only is what seriously interests me."

"You must narrow that statement a bit, Wagner," said the voice. "You should say that nothing seriously interests you except your own work—your own music. You care about no music that is not your own."

"And why should I, will you explain? What has been done in my day that is worth while, except that which I wrote? All else is beneath me. There is nothing I can adore and worship except the music of Bach and Beethoven. All else is frail and weak besides the things I dream of and write down. Why should I praise those who would not hold to the ideals I followed?

"How else could I go?" Wagner asked with eloquent gesture. "The world is a selfish place. I find only envy, only opposition. The great genius is not recognized. You must fight, you must advertise, you must sell yourself, you must praise yourself. Why should it be necessary for me to *urge* the world to take my music? Why should I have spent years in making fools see my great operas? Now, they know me, yes, how they rave over my "Lohengrin," my "Isolde," my "Flying Dutchman"! But why all those years?

"I set out as a boy with original genius; my father dead, my mother married to another man. Then he died, my mother a widow, no means. I studied hard, I wrote from the earliest days. I went through my youth, fighting off the call of the flesh. I heard Beethoven and only that standard I could endure.

Poor, ambitious, I went on and on. I married a poor girl who never understood me——"

"Oh, Richard, do not lie." A sad, trembling, womanly voice rose. "You know how you said you loved me. You know that we went through the bitter years together, I never complaining. I lied to the storekeepers to keep you out of jail for your debts. I lied to our friends to borrow money which you never intended to repay. I traveled with you in exile when your foolish tongue would not be still, and you would have your word on politics. I sailed on those deathening ships, cooking for you, sewing for you, never a word of pain. I was with you when you rushed into the magnificent home in Paris on a mere promise of success. I was with you when we left the first day to take cheaper quarters. You cried out at fate, I comforted you."

"Oh, Minna, Minna, you know we were never intended for each other. You know it. You did not understand my dreams, my hopes, my big pictures of musical domination. What did you tell me, when I was developing my music of the future? 'Write for the gallery,' you said. Write for the gallery! That's what you knew of me. I was willing to starve for my art. I was willing to take the chance. I knew my time would come. I knew something would . . . turn up. The world had to recognize me——"

"Very good. That is right. I'll agree, Richard, I didn't know you for what you are. But no man has a right to treat his wife, his helpmate, his com-

panion in suffering as you did. Your romances—well, I closed my eyes to them all. And then for you to leave me. God will never forgive you for that. I have forgiven you, He won't. But the worst, the way you have sat in this room, with that Cosima, the wife of Bülow, your wife, Richard, dictating to her, your book, your autobiography, and lying about me, giving her the story of my so-called crimes against you, the great, the mighty. That is like you, Richard, to be a cad. That is like the way you treated many a woman, who gave herself to you, that is how you left her in the lurch after you were through."

"Minna, you have not understood. I loved you—I wanted to help you—I meant you no harm. But I have needed these women. They have been essential to me, to my inspiration, to my music, and hence to the world. You and I discussed practical things. They and I discussed spiritual things. One was *Isolde*—others food for inspiration. They have given wings to my dreams."

"Dreams you indulged at other people's expense," said a mean, hard voice, breaking in. "Herr Wesedonck gave you a house—you stole his wife. Liszt was always helping—you ran away with his daughter, the wife of your friend. At the expense of husbands and mothers and brothers, at the expense of your friends, always so you lived. A friend was only some one to be used, as far as you could see. . . ."

"Stop," shouted Wagner, "that's a lie. Wesedonck knew all along. Years later he was my friend. She was my dear love. And of Cosima von Bülow —I defy you. I was never happy at home—neither was she. Von Bülow understood, he was gracious, and Cosima has been my life hope, understanding me. . . . I reached for the moon—and only a few even knew there was a moon."

Now, trying to outshout each other, came plaintiffs with other charges.

One man called: "Yes, you were not very nice to me, Wagner. You used me as long as you could, wrote letters not requesting, but demanding, money of me, and refusing to know me any more when I couldn't help you. You spent money like a spendthrift, money which didn't belong to you. You expected everybody to give, give, give to you. You wrote me that I could give myself the honor of having you live at our house for several months. Insolence. . . ."

"I begged to save my wife," Wagner retorted. "All I wanted was a little home in the country. If I had had it, instead of all I suffered, I might have been a different man. I was strong, but my heart couldn't stand all that."

"Strong—bah. You didn't like people to know your womanish habits, you writer of mighty topics. So you had your perfume sent to Bernard Schnaphaupf, a fictitious gentleman who substituted with the tradesmen for you. And so you roll in it. Your

bed cost $12,000, made of silk, while your wife lay starving."

Another voice yelled: "You wounded your friends without a qualm of conscience. You invited us to dine at your home and were insulting because we didn't buy wine for you. You embarrassed your guests, you were unkind to the best of men and women. With all your greatness, what a mean petty man. No honor. No principle. You were a democrat always preaching 'the people, the people,' and yet you lived in dishonor and perversion with kings who gave you what you asked for—you believed in the people except as they didn't believe in you."

One sneered: "You love the sound of your voice, you would read all night to any who would listen, so much does your own self please yourself."

A chorus taunted: "You loved only those who loved you. Egotist. Vain fool. Perverse. Tactless. Oh, Wagner, why have you been such a man?"

Complex Wagner! This was the inner man. Standing in the dim light so we seemed to hear of his whims, his errors, his meanness, his craftiness, his unfairness, his unsteadiness, his dual personality, his unreasonable prejudices, his hatred of all who did not worship him; his selfishness, his greediness. And through it all, we caught the sometime tender nature of a lover, a singer, a dreamer, a climber in the clouds.

He stood in the midst of the storm of hatred, receiving the charges, sometimes false, shaking his

fist at his accusers, answering them if he had answer or not.

"Prate on," he thundered, "you made me do it. You didn't recognize me. I had to tell you I was a god—I had to break your back to make you listen. I guess you're right about this human frame of mine, I guess you're right. But, God Almighty, I'll accept your knives and guns. Riddle this body full. I care not for it or me, believe it or not. I would trample this form under foot as I thrust all aside, family, wife, friends, traditions to answer the call of my art. That is all that counts. I know it. Get you gone, you little petty mortals. Do you think I am of your kin? Get you gone."

But what of Wagner, that shell of a man, what of his doings? What matter they now? What difference has prattling, his grumbling, his offenses against good nature?

There was something which came out of that mess of a life, that story no human being ought to hope to follow, that example of conceit, and cruelty comparable only to the ancient tyrants. In that untilled soil, in that never-conforming nature, there was eternally blooming a flower of music; there was rooted a tree of superior knowledge.

He sat there in his big chair, with the velvet cap lolling over his head, the perfume wafted to his nostrils, the thick rugs under his feet, with the poverty in the forgotten past.

And despite everything, he was Wagner.

Yes! He was opera personified. He was the creator of the newer form of art; he gave to the drama the musical idea; he gave to music the dramatic idea. He was poet, philosopher, political thinker, dramatist, musician, and leader. He was a god in man. He created chords of music which are more powerful than volumes of philosophy and more moving than tons of dynamite. He poured a potion even more potent than Isolde's. He left his imprint of his century and knew it would never be erased. He was the nearest approach to the divinity that music has ever known. He made the greatest strides in all music. All future writing dates from him. All the past he swept away; he created a new world. His operas are the biggest works ever written. He is the inspiration for all musicians of the present and the future.

It was he who made music speak the action. The orchestra tells the approach of a character, her speech, her exit. The music is all-powerful and yet it is wedded to the words. He was a playwright whose lyrics are able to stand even without the music.

He sensed the biggest vision in all musical and even all art creation, in that he planned for every art.

Every other musician dims beside him and yet how he was reviled—how he was fought. Still he won; such was his power.

Tristan, Isolde! The motive of the ocean! The

motive of thunder! The songs of *Siegfried!* The Niebelungen Ring! The merry *Hans Sachs*, the noble *Parsifal*, the chords that could only be Wagner.

What of the things that Wagner did? What matter they?

Was he not Wagner?

Wagner is the exception to the rule of composers. Everything he ever wrote had the elements of greatness—was great. But his best operas are these: "Tristan und Isolde," "The Master Singers of Nuremberg," "Tannhäuser," "Lohengrin," "Rheingold," "Rienzi," "Parsifal," "The Flying Dutchman," "Götterdämmerung," "Siegfried," "The Valkyries."

Hundreds of articles and books have been written on the Wagner question. Recommended are the biographies by Pohl, Wolzogen, Hueffler, Tappert, Kobbe, Finck, Glisenapp, and Ellis.

II

FACE TO FACE WITH ROSSINI

1792–1868

EVERYBODY goes over to Rossini's. It's better than the theater; you get a full evening's jolly entertainment. Old Rossini is a scream; he could make anybody laugh, but woe to the one on whom he turns his stream of caustic wit. Deliver me! You see everybody there—if Parisians have nothing else to do they pay Rossini a visit. It's a mighty fortunate thing the madame is good natured or she would never permit it. She spends her time between the kitchen and serving table, but she seems to take a delight in stuffing her guests and feeding them as though they hadn't eaten for a month. It's a great household—and the headquarters of the Parisian music situation, which means just now the center of the musical universe. Come on over.

No, you don't ring—walk in, the welcome sign is out. A good afternoon to you, Mme. Olympe. I have brought another musician. Thank you, how

is the maestro to-day? Yes, we'll go right into the parlor.

You see what a gathering? Over there is Flotow, Auber, Adam, Halévy. That is Rossini, you couldn't miss him. What a fat, rotund, portly individual, round as a barrel! There he sits from morning to night, laughing away and joking with the visitors. His face isn't very æsthetic, to be sure—heavy jowls, baggy eyes, double chin, large, spreading nose. He doesn't need to speak for us to know his whole make-up. Lazy, indolent, and those blinking eyes, sparkling with wit. Those tight lips are not of the shrewd man; they too, are of the humorous comedian. The fat hands are resting on the arms of the comfortable chair, the head is perked roguishly at an angle.

"So he asked what his music sounded like to me," said Rossini, continuing his story we had interrupted. " 'Well,' I said, 'there is much that is new and much that is beautiful!' That pleased the chap and he bowed his acknowledgment. He should have waited for me to finish. 'But' I went on, 'that which is new is not beautiful, and that which is beautiful is not new.' That fixed him"—and Rossini shook with laughter, chuckled from deep within his frame, clapped his hands on his lap and threatened to explode.

"When he first came to me, he was very anxious that I should remember him. 'Don't you recall, it was at a big banquet, there was a tremendous

macaroni pie, and I sat alongside of you?' I pretended to think very hard and then I answered, 'I remember the pie, yes, but not you.' It had no effect on him, he insisted on my reading his music. I cautioned him. 'There be some who have talents and are failures, but I am one, though a success, with no talent.' Don't let any of you here dare again to ask my advice. Remember, you all heard what I told that fat singer the other day—'Become a dancer.' 'But I am fat as a bear, maestro.' 'Well, there is a demand for dancing bears.'

"I have no respect for anybody, no matter how near they are to me. Once I was conducting an orchestra. I heard a terrible horn note, it rang out loud and muddily. It gave me a pain in my stomach. I threw down the baton. 'Who did that?' A pitiful voice said, 'I did. I'm sorry.' It was my respected father. 'You did, did you—go home and sober up.'

"A lovely man, my father. I remember my infant days—my father inspecting slaughter houses, and me holding on to his hand. I am a food product, you might say. My mother was a baker's daughter. But I want you to know that my father was also a considerable figure in our little town of Pesaro. He was official trumpeter. That is to say, whenever anybody was born or died, or was married, father played a fanfare on his bugle. That, with his slaughter work, kept him busy—that is when he was not resting up from a duet with the spirituous

liquids. Father was very adventurous. He went to prison for a few years—he didn't agree with accepted political opinions.

"Of course, mother and I had to eat. She had a voice and a sense of humor and she did some work in a comic opera troupe in nearby towns. I was to stick close to parental habits, so I was apprenticed to a pork butcher—a lovely job. I carried in the little pigs to the slaughter house. I never forgot my slaughter-house boyhood. The other day I wept—it was the only time in my life that I wept. We were out for a picnic in the country. Olympe had prepared the loveliest capon, just to my taste. Remember, my dear, we were in a little rowboat? I started to carve it, not the boat, and over went the capon. I wept, I tell you. Memories of boyhood days.

"Though, when I come to think of it, I wasn't such a very good pork butcher. They apprenticed me next to a blacksmith, where I harnessed and unharnessed horses. But the call of father's trumpet was sounding—I was destined to music. Do you understand me? I began to sing in inns and terrible opera companies, and to act as accompanist for singers, and then they put me in charge of the chorus—fat, old ladies!

"Have you ever seen a small town opera chorus? I was not quite fifteen and that was my job. Meanwhile I was doing serious studying in spare minutes and a little cantata I wrote won first prize. That

settled me—I went off to study composition in earnest.

"Father said, 'If you go in for opera you will starve,' but I figured that my respected pater was as good a prophet as a horn player, so I went in for opera, and supported the family ever after.

"My methods of writing didn't always please my managers. So one manager at San Mose handed me a libretto saying, 'It's not of much value—go and write an opera.' I didn't answer, but went to work with my little joke. I gave the soprano only low notes, the bass singers only high ones. For the love scene I wrote the music in funeral march time, the death scene was in scherzo spirit. I made the violinists tap the lights with their bows, the drummer had to lie flat on his stomach while playing. The red lights were used at night and the blue lights in daytime. I turned everything topsy-turvy. The audience was furious, but I had my joke.

"I've always been joking. I was engaged to sing one time when I was a lad at a Cardinal's. I was cautioned not to get on the love element, as the Cardinal was very peculiar that way. I did the most suggestive little airs of the boulevards, and scandalized the company."

Rossini kept it up incessantly, and, indeed, it was as good as a show. Everybody listened spellbound.

"You've come in to see old Rossini, what?" he drawled at me, "Well, young man, if you have anything in the world that I can do to help you, call

on me. They say you have talent. Talent needs every support the world can give it. Art is a flower which should be nurtured carefully. They didn't nurture my art—they broke my spirit, years and years ago. I was the king of opera. Napoleon one night sent for me to come to his box—I was not in evening clothes, but he insisted—'Between emperors, no formalities.'

"I had written forty-eight operas by the time I was thirty-seven, and along came my "William Tell." Nothing ever equaled it—I am not bragging, but nothing ever did equal it. Nor had any comic opera ever approached the "Barber of Seville."

"They set such petty things in the way of my happiness. They cut and cut my operas, so much so that when I met one of the conductors I set up in a fencing attitude, for I felt he would cut my body open, too. My poor "William Tell." Talk about having to shoot an apple off the son's head. They began eliminating arias and duets. Finally, one day, they came to me and said, 'We hope you won't feel badly about it, to-night we do only the second act of "Tell." ' 'The whole of it?' I sneered.

"Then along came Meyerbeer, and the fickle public forgot me. Meyerbeer didn't care very much for Rossini. One day we met on the street. 'How are you?' he asked. 'Never felt so poorly in my life,' I answered. When he left us, Olympe said, 'I didn't know you were sick.' 'I'm not,—never felt better in my life; but I knew that answer would

make Meyerbeer happy.' Along came the Wagner movement—ridiculous. I was reading one of the Wagner operas upside down the other day—it's just as sensible as the right way. Well, if the public didn't want me, I didn't care. I swore I would never write another opera. That was over thirty years ago, and I have kept my word, though all sorts of pleas and offers have come to me. It isn't worth while."

"It isn't that you were too lazy to write, or too wrapped up in your wife, dear?" asked Olympe slyly.

"Yes, it was. A combination of both and my pique at the way they treated me. I hate work. I love to loll about and sleep and eat and live. I was born leap year day. That accounts for it.

"One winter's day I was lying in bed. It was terribly cold, and I was nestled there comfortably, writing my latest opera. I was working on a quintette. As fast as I would finish a page, I pushed it aside. The pages fell to the floor. I wanted to go over them and continue the action. But they had fallen just out of reach of my hand. It was cozy in bed, and I was too comfortable to get up. Should I get up? Should I stay in bed? I tried to remember the melody, but it had fled from my mind. What was there to do? I simply had to write the quintette all over, and then made sure to keep the sheets close to me.

"In every instance I used to wait until the last

minute to do my work. A theater would give me a commission to write an opera, and so much time in which to do it. I moved on to the town, looked myself up a comfortable home, was dined and fêted by the celebrities, for I was a great lion in those days. Half the time went by, and nothing would be done on the opera. The managers would be frantic. I told them to have no fears.

"I would pick my theme and prepare to work. But visitors, visitors were there to listen to me and talk as well. Just like this group.

"In between conversation with the talk going on around me I'd write. At night we'd go out on little parties. I'd come home tired out, but a melody for the opera would be singing in my ears. I'd scribble it down, fall asleep, and to work in the morning with my company engaging my attention. But the operas were always successful. There was "The Barber of Seville," though, which failed. The people turned it down completely because I had used a book of another composer who had given me his permission. I gave it up and next night they came rushing over to tell me "The Barber" was a hit.

"They almost made me feel foolish. One English lady took the prize. She called on me, and I was always out to her. One day she saw me as I was leaving the house. She followed my carriage. I must tell you about the carriage, by the way. It was given me by a nobleman, who said he couldn't bear to see such a genius walk on foot. Why don't

some of you fellows get noblemen to think you're geniuses? . . . But that English lady. She watched me get out at a store—a food store. I was admiring some asparagus. And in the glass I could see my admirer looking me over. I turned around, and then gave her a view of me from all angles, pirouetting around like a model in a clothing shop. She was in ecstasies, and didn't notice the amazed passers-by. 'Now, madame,' I said, 'you have had your entertainment. Pay your admission. Send that bunch of asparagus up to my house'—and I left her. She did.

"In my music some insist I owe my success to my crescendos—starting a melody very softly and then bringing it up to a loud ending. They called me Mr. Crescendo, and when I stopped using that form, they said I was on the decline."

Still talking—and now eating; still drinking—and now laughing. A show indeed! You wondered how he did it and where he kept his inexhaustible fund of humor.

"Good night, my young friends," he said to us, finally getting up from his chair and waddling like a young elephant. "In my will I am leaving a fund for musicians and I shall leave enough to build a conservatory in my native town of Pesaro. I hope you get some of it."

As we walked away from the merry house—the house which for almost forty years was silent musically—we thought of the viceroy's speech when

Rossini was about to be drafted in the army as a young man. "Exempt him. He will make a mediocre soldier. He is a great musician. He keeps my people happy at home. We should not expose composers or artists to the cannon balls of our enemies."

Rossini was not always the voluptuary. He wrote forty-eight operas, fourteen cantatas, thirty-one vocal pieces, and many sacred compositions. Of the latter, the best are "Stabat Mater," "Tantum Ergo," and "O Salutaris." The best of his operas are "William Tell," "The Barber of Seville," "Semiramide," and "Othello." He must also be remembered for "Moses in Egypt," "Italian in Algiers," and "Tancredi."

Remember his remarkable fluency of writing and then his long, unbroken silence. At the end he liked his spaghetti better than his music!

Books about the composer: Biographies by Zanolini, Edwards, Bevan, Azevedo, Mirecourt, Garbani, and Stendhal.

III

FACE TO FACE WITH BERLIOZ

1803–1869

IT is all very well, you people who live with your families, believing in each other; they think what you do is good, they do not question your every decision and they do not laugh at you and scorn you. And as for you, maybe you do not run counter to their wishes. Eh? Well, you are to be envied. You are in a state of mind that is peaceful. But as for me, while I envy you the first thing—that is having family and friends who are not enemies to your wishes—still, still I could not be a slave to their demands, I could not live just according to what they say.

"You think because you see me in this dirty, lonely hole of a room that I am nobody. Well, I am as good as nobody, I will admit. I mean my body, I mean my soul even. But this is the remains of an ego, the remains of a great ego. You think because you see me pale and haggard, in rags and in misery, old, decrepit, bent, that I am simply

an outcast. I will admit I am an outcast. Yes, I will admit anything.

"Look at me. All my faith is gone. I have no faith. I hate everything and every man. God is stupid. Every hour I say to Death, 'Do what you like. What are you waiting for?' . . . Oh, that pain, the paroxysm of it. Oh, wait, I must lie down. Wait. Wait. Oh!

"It is exhausting. What it is comes over me like that I do not understand. Just another pill in my bitter medicine, I guess. Pah for God, and eternity. And yet, I must not die; I must not go like this. I have still to prove things. Still to make myself understood.

"You have your family who dote on you. But I have always had a family who never understood.

"Look! Look out of this window. Down there is Paris, alive, gay, colorful. She is my mistress and she spurns me. All my life I have been trying to make her love me. I have sacrificed to her, I have lowered my pride before her, and always she turns away from me, and takes up with the poorer stuff than I am. Yes, it's just being misunderstood.

"There is Paris. Here is Paris, and yet look at me, I am still a stranger to her. This is my family, I am the son of Paris. I am the son of Parisians. I am the son of France, I am the son of the Berlioz. And always this family of mine has scorned me. If not scorned, at least forbade me my liberty.

"Liberty! Better liberty in this hole of a garret,

in these rags, in this poverty, in this sickness, than the most comfortable bed in the palace without my liberty.

"You who do not know yet what it means to be in a circle of relatives, of friends, of co-workers, of compatriots, the outcast and the superior of them all, how can you know me? . . . Yesterday I read in a paper by a critic of renown these words: 'Hector Berlioz, who was called by Paganini, the successor to Beethoven—this same Berlioz seems to have placed himself among that immortal set of the master masters, Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, and his contemporary, Wagner.' What does it mean? What will it mean to me, when to-morrow, maybe, I am put into the ground, to have a future world bow to Berlioz? When his nearest, his dearest, those whom he craved, turned from him?

"It seems as if families and countries and times plan the future of the son, and expect that the boy follow out the plans, no matter what other calls there may come from something bigger and more relentless.

"Look you, my father was a loving man. I adored him. I adored my mother. You want to know what my father looked like, just glance at me. I will show you the likeness and the change. Our faces were shaped the same—this high forehead, this strangely impertinent, square, prominent chin, these eyes far back, this long nose, this tight, thin-lipped mouth. The differences? He was not so thin. His

hair was not so matted, and this 'horn of hair, like a wild animal in pursuit' was more orderly on my father's head. In him was the same tenacity, but used against progress, while mine was in favor. He stood back. I was for going forward. There were not these many wrinkles on his brow, nor yet these clouds of morbid melancholy to disturb the sunny disposition of his life. His voice was deep like mine, but—no, he did not talk like . . . Not these short gasps. Ah, no, he was even-minded, so he said. He was not given to bursts of crazy enthusiasm. No. He never could see that if there were not crazy enthusiasms like this, we would have no artists. There would be no sculpture. There would be no Shakespeare.

"At home, we were very happy, until the storm came. My father, being a doctor, it was all decided I should succeed him. We had the practice, the reputation, the carriage and horse, and what not—the signs, the office. So why waste effort? I began to do something with music as a child, I played the flute, I picked it up myself. In order to get me to go ahead with my lessons in medicine, I was told I'd get a nice new flute. That made me study. But when I saw the operating room, the corpses—Oh, I ran away. In despair, I sought refuge in the temple of art, in the opera house, where they were playing Gluck. Oh, the contrast, from the sick room to the room of heaven. I decided that I wanted to go into music. I talked with my father and mother, and

showed them with all the eloquence I could summon what it meant to me, to do what I loved. My mother, as much as she adored me, said she would have nothing more to do with me, if I went into the licentiousness of art—she only thought of what wrongs she had heard committed in the name of art. My father was less cruel, but more determined. He tried to argue me out of my ambition. He talked to me as if I were a foolish boy.

"To love a man as I did my father, and yet feel like murdering him for his lack of broadmindedness —for his own conceited idea, that he knew everything. You should obey your father, says the law of custom—the son who is obstinate is a bad boy. I felt ashamed of myself, I would go on my knees to my father and my mother and beg, beg, beg them to try to see my way of thinking. I would make success, I would bring renown to their name. At last, giving me up as a foolish and worthless job, I was told, 'All right, go ahead, but if you don't make good quickly, we're through.'

"Oh, how I wanted to prove to my father that I was worthy of him and his love and respect. I worked like mad to get into the conservatory. I became a pupil of Leseur. I wrote some things; he tried to help me make my father see that I was something of a possibility. I got my uncle to try to make the family see my worth. . . . I wrote a wonderful, then wonderful, mass. Leseur liked it. It was played, but the orchestra was so bad that it was a

failure. A letter promptly came from home, emphasizing the failure. . . . I tried to explain. But it was useless. I wanted to prove it need not have been a failure. I would put it on, produce it myself. I didn't have the necessary funds, so I borrowed twelve hundred francs. And the mass succeeded. But I owed twelve hundred francs. I got into the Conservatory at last, in spite of the enmity the director, Cherubini,[1] bore me, for nothing at all. I got in. I wanted the prize of Rome—that would prove it to my father that I was worthy. But something happened. The friend who loaned me the twelve hundred francs, and to whom I had paid back half of it, from my allowance and menial things I did, was sorry for me. He wrote a letter to my father, intending to help me. When my father saw I was in debt, he cut off my allowance and me. You cannot feel what I felt then.

"But I wouldn't give up. I was eager for that prize. Finally I came to the competition. My work was for orchestra; a mediocre pianist said it couldn't be played, and I was thrown out. Cherubini, the director, hated me, he did, and he was glad, and my father heard and shook his head angrily. But still I kept up, and the next year I received second prize, which consisted of a laurel wreath and a pass to the opera. . . . Much use!

"Then I determined to fool them—if that com-

[1] See "Face to Face with Cherubini," *Face to Face with Great Musicians,* First Group.

mittee of judges was so stupid, I would make the music stupid and playable by the mediocre pianist. So I won the Prize of Rome, which sent me to Italy with money and opportunity. . . . I did not belong in Italy. I belonged with my family. That's what I did. And I belonged in Paris.

"Paris! Gay, colorful, coquettish, relentless Paris! I have always loved you, and I have always been ready to sacrifice to you. I have walked your streets by day and by night, in rain and snow and summer heat. I have known your slums and your palaces and I have found romance in every spot. All over Paris I found ideas for mighty works.

"In Italy I suffered for Paris and I was given leave to return. Oh, the joy of the first meeting, when I flew into her arms again! Paris, the Conservatory, the musicians, the colleagues of our class! I did not know music as most of our musicians have known it. I played only the flute. I have lived in a maze of mystery, never quite understanding myself. From whence comes this mystic power, this flood of harmony that is in me? I have wanted to prove to them that I am not worthless—knowing, not with conceit but an inner driving power, that I have the biggest gift for them and our art, yet I have never been understood. I stand today a failure. A failure—that's what. My symphonies are only mildly received, and as far as opera is concerned—I cannot write it. That's the decision.

"If I could make only some one believe in me!

"Then I fell in love. It was long ago, when I was a young man at the Conservatory. An English company came to Paris. It was playing Shakespeare, and one girl, Henrietta Smithson, I saw as Juliet. The words of Shakespeare trilled musically from the pretty lips of that girl, who ravished my heart as no human being has ever done before or since. I do not know if it was Juliet or Henrietta Smithson, but I went almost out of mind. I could not speak to her, for I was only a music student and all Paris was at her feet. So I walked the streets, gaunt, sometimes following her, sometimes under her window. . . . Then I thought again—if she believed in me, as an artist, I would be on a plane with her. So I gave a concert—I must confess it, it was the mass which failed. But, truth to tell, she never knew it was played before.

"Years passed, my going to Italy entered my life, and my return. To my great joy, she, Henrietta Smithson, had come back to Paris. Again, again the desire to win a supporter to prove my worth obsessed my being. I managed to bring Henrietta to hear one of my concerts, and, later, I wooed her.

"I am afraid that Henrietta Smithson never really understood me, though she married me, and I married her along with debts from which I never freed myself. . . . Ah, she did not talk always like Juliet, nor utter Shakespeare's metaphors. Also she, like my father, my mother, my Paris, and my colleagues, thought me worthless.

"There were times when she was very ill. I was sorry for her. She had been a strange wife to me, but she had come to me when I wanted her, and she had given me my son Louis. . . . Oh my, excuse me, excuse this old man, if he cries over his son. Louis, my boy, who died—a fine big man, strong, healthy, my only pride, dead. . . . Dead!

"But I was saying about my wife, when she was ill. I would feel an idea for a big symphony. I'd get up at night to write it. Then I would think—if I go ahead on this, it will take months; I'll have no chance to write articles for the paper, no chance to make money. It'll take many hundreds of francs to have it copied and then played, and the concert will lose money, and I shall have not enough to pay doctors and food bills and take care of my son. So I'd throw down the pen, and forget it. Again and again, would I do it.

"All the time I realized that I was cutting new roads.

"My plans in music were something different. Look you, I believe that the opera at best is but a weaker expression of our art. Music needs no words. It can say anything, it can do anything. It can make you happy, sad, crazy. It can express the slightest shade of meaning. I have gone to extremes, perhaps, to prove my idea. You must sometimes exaggerate in order to make yourself clear. I tried to do more with the orchestra than had ever been done before. To take more liberties, and not be

bound down with cast iron rules. Liberty! yes. Music, with all its traditions is an absolute monarchy and we must make anarchs of art! I have been an anarch.

"Outside of my Paris, they began to understand. I was received with kindly words by other cities, by other countries than my France. But I always received the successes and the praise with a note of intense regret. Because at home, they had not yet received me. I was an outcast in my own beloved circles.

"It is strange now what I tell you, that the man who first turned the tide of favor toward me, was also misunderstood—maybe more so than I, although that could not be. Can you guess who it was? Paganini, the violinist.

"One day, a thin, gaunt, eel-like figure with a white staring face, appeared in my room—I recognized Paganini at once. He paid me many compliments and then told me he wanted a solo for the viola. . . . I wrote it. Paganini was so enthusiastic about it! He said, 'Hail, Beethoven's successor,' and he left me a big bag of gold.

"Paganini, who they said was the son of the devil, the first to appreciate and seemingly understand me! Maybe, misery recognizes company, eh?

"I could have done what I did to win the Prize of Rome. I could have debased my art, and given that which was wanted rather than what was best, but that would have been an insult to my family,

my Paris, my country. Maybe some day they will all understand.

"A week ago I had something happen to me, which you will all laugh at. . . . I saw an old lady, who once was a beautiful girl, and she still seemed beautiful to me. When I was but eleven and she was seventeen, I knew her. Her name was Estelle and she had beautiful curls and she wore pink slippers, and all through my life I loved her. When I was but eleven and she was seventeen the very sight of her sent my blood coursing and I blushed. She thought me a silly little boy, never understood me, or put me down for something or somebody of genius.

"So a week ago I saw her accidentally. I felt my boyhood returning. I went to her, and I said to her (ignoring her wrinkles of seventy and her decreptitude), 'There is nothing real in this world but that which lives in the heart. . . . My life has been wrapped up in the little world in which you live.'

" 'I would like to spend the rest of our years together.' I fell at her feet and wept and asked to put my head in her lap, our hands together—so to finish.

"She looked at me, and frowned. She said that she was old and could not understand.

"I came back and here I am. My family, my city of beloved Paris, my country, my colleagues and contemporaries—never understanding.

"Oh, if I could only live to see the day that my music will prove to them that I was not a fraud but worth while, a true son and friend to them all . . . if I could only live!

The important works of Berlioz are: "The Damnation of Faust," "Benvenuto Cellini," "Waverley," "Les Francs Juges," "Episode in the Life of an Artist," "Concerts des Sylphes," "Harold en Italie," "Romeo and Juliette," "Carneval Romain," "Beatrice and Benedict," "The Ruins of Carthage," "La Prise de Troie," "Te Deum," "Grande Symphonie Funebre et Triomphale," "Le Corsaire," "Le Cinq Mai."

Books about the composer: Autobiography; memoirs.

IV

FACE TO FACE WITH ADELINA PATTI [1]

1843–1919

WHEN the world has grown very old, when these days which are very close to us have faded into the dim distance of antiquity, one name they will murmur whenever a woman sings. Just as war and conquest make us think of Cæsar; just as the epic poem makes us recall Homer; just as medicine evokes out of the early days the thought of Hippocrates, so these future music-lovers will listen to the sopranos of their age and say, "But how Patti must have sung!"

The Queen of Song and the Empress of Wales is what they called Adelina Patti but recently. In the south of that rugged, rocky land, in the Swansea Valley, nestles the castle of the diva. "Craig y Nos"

[1] This was written just before Patti's death. It was expected that a personal note would be added from the diva herself; but the Grim Reaper intervened. This particular rendition, unlike most of the others in the volume, is taken from those who knew the subject personally—members of the author's immediate family.

she has named it. As you look down from a high rock on the coast you see how beautifully and symmetrically she has laid it out. A grand, awe-inspiring place it is, full of a greatness that is Nature's —singing in Nature's accents of the glories of the world.

To-night, so the villagers say, there is a concert up at the castle. Baroness Cederstrom, the good friend of the people, is always doing something of the sort. It's a beautiful theater she's built for her friends. Lovely shows she gives there, run entirely by herself. Once in a while she sings, too. It's a lovely voice still. She sings simple songs with such wonderful feeling. She always touches your heart.

I listened to a phonograph record, made after she had passed her prime. I nearly cried.

She's an old lady, is the Baroness Cederstrom, seventy-five last week, but, honestly, you'd never know it to hear her and see her. Indeed, you would not! She received us in her beloved music room. She was seated on a divan, looking like a queen. A woman of graceful figure, well-proportioned, she had not gained the old-lady manner nor lost the contour of her prime.

The wonderful head looked like the pictures by which she is known so well. A little mouth, large eyes, still lustrous, dark and deep. The forehead high and intelligent, the eyebrows arched and almost meeting, two little dimples at the mouth, a

prominent chin—we looked at the painting on the wall and back to her, and wondered how she laughed at time. For the painting showed Adelina Patti as she looked at thirty-seven, and twice that many years now were hers. When that portrait was made the beauty of Patti was the toast of aspiring wooers.

The baroness smiled in greeting. What a smile! In it she seemed to bestow all the goodness of a philanthropist. That, I said to myself, is the famous Patti smile which won audiences before they heard a note.

"I am so glad you came," simply said and quietly. But how assuring and hospitable it sounded. "I knew your aunt. She sang with me in America. I loved her very much. I would have her stay only with me in my private train. So funny—oh, she made me laugh even when I felt like weeping. And how she could cook spaghetti! Like an Italian. Better than my chef. She loved to supervise the spaghetti.

"And your father. A splendid violinist he was. I caused him a lot of trouble, I'm afraid. You ask him about my Stradivarius violin. He bought it for me; was responsible for my taking it. And he was so much upset when it was stolen. Oh, that was a grand scandal. I forget the name of the man we suspected. Your father had to testify. He was more troubled than I was.

"I recall singing with your father's uncle, Barney

Isaacson, in London. He was conductor at the Queen's Theater, and the finest I ever knew."

She seemed to remember much about my family —she remembers everything, and soon we were talking like school children.

"Out here in this calm place everything of the past seems like a dream. Except for the actual mementos and souvenirs I am continually observing I would think it was really a dream."

The baroness showed me many of her precious possessions—gifts of royalty, aristocracy, friends, managers, audiences—a whole museum carried from every part of the world.

"Yes, like a dream it seems. With parts of it staring like a nightmare. Look, see those reefs of rocks," and Patti pointed out to the coast; "there were several moments in my career when it seemed as though success, life itself, even, could not be moved as easily as those rocks. Several times my voice was threatened. Several times my life was near a close. Several times poverty stared at me."

A beautiful chime was heard coming from the watch tower. It played a little arpeggio.

"Noon," said Patti.

"Noon comes in with music here?"

"Everything comes in with music. I cannot end my life without it since all through it I have heard it."

Patti took down an old scrapbook and turned to some fading daguerrotypes.

"This is my mother, Catarina Chiesi, and my father, Salvatore Catania Patti." She kissed the pictures. "They were opera singers—struggling hard to make a living. A large family had to be fed. There was no letting up. My mother couldn't go to bed when she felt sick. My mother! Two hours after she finished singing an opera I was born. I might be said to have been born to music's accompaniment, and back stage at the opera, at that!

"It was in Madrid. But by the time I was three weeks old we had moved to Milan and my parents were planning to go to America, the land of opportunity. They would have left everybody behind. My sisters, Amelia and Carlotta, big girls, remained. I was too young, so I went along.

"We came to New York—down around Twenty-second street we lived. Father got a job that paid very little salary, I can tell you, and we had a hard time to keep our life in our bodies.

"Those sad days, weeks, when we hardly had a bite of food all day; nights when we huddled together in bed to try to keep warm; times when our clothes consisted of rags, instead of anything deserving a better name. Oh, it is hard to think of it; even now, I want to cry. My poor, poor mother and father. How they suffered, and how I did, too, little thin, sickly child that I was!

"All the Italian musicians called on us. Arditi, then quite a figure, honored us. He would even compose in our little rooms. I used to watch him

and one day I tried to help him when he was gone. I spilled ink all over his manuscript. Mother was furious and Arditi took me on his knee and spanked me—he did. Years later, we talked about it, and laughed.

"They used to let me come behind the stage for the opera. I remember the little girl I was, just five years old, looking through the peep holes in the scenery and drinking it all in.

"At night in my room I'd go all through the music and acting, looking at myself in the mirror. Everything came naturally to me. I would go through all the acts myself, amusing myself and bowing to myself in the mirror. I trilled and phrased without any instructors. It just came naturally and easily.

"One day I said to the prima donna (I was five and she was fifty-five): 'You do that trill wrong. It is this way.' And although I had never been taught, I showed her. She told me I was a saucy child, but next time she sang she followed what I had suggested.

"Nobody had ever noticed my voice until one night father came home and heard me singing an aria I had listened to that very day. He rushed in and grabbed me to him and said: 'A bird that is, the trill of a bird.'

"He was getting into debt; friends told him I would make money, and so they put me out to perform for the public.

"He didn't want to do it. 'She's only a little

bambina,' he said. 'She is just ready to grow up.' He knew, however, that people would be curious to hear a little girl in short muslins, her hair in curls, singing like a woman. At first they kept the curls, then they combed them up, because I seemed too young. And I was so old, think of it! I was seven then. It was in Tripler's Hall, New York. Here, this is how I looked, as a little child," and she showed me an old-fashioned baby face, the dress reached the shoe tops, the hair was combed as for a woman of thirty. A pitiful looking child.

"They stood me on a table and I sang, in my long, old-fashioned dress, thinking myself the most important little person in all the world because now mamma and papa and the rest of the family wouldn't starve. I was going to be wealthy!

"But after a few times of it I became restless; I wanted to play. One day there were two little girls in the front row. They looked so friendly. So I said right out loud: 'When I get through singing meet me outside and we'll play together.'

"Other times I would cry, and the only way my father and my manager could persuade me to sing was with a box of candies. That always worked.

"Things went so well in New York they decided to carry me through the country. At night in the trains—there were mighty bad accommodations then —my father would bundle me up in a shawl and put me to sleep on the seat.

"The second tour went much better. Ole Bull,

the violinist, was the big star. I was his assistant and there were times when I was the most applauded!

"So the early years rushed on until one day a terrible thing happened. My voice was gone!"

As Patti recalled it she shuddered.

"My sister's husband, Maurice Strakosch, was consulted. He told my father that I needed rest. So for two years I didn't sing a note—just grew strong. I ate plenty of food and had good strong soups to drink, and I breathed fresh air—not in the tenements.

"I blossomed. Before that I had been an ugly duckling. Then I became la Bella Adelina.

"At sixteen came the long-hoped-for event. I made my début in opera in "Lucia."

"It was in the Academy of Music in New York City. Americans have said much about artists making their successes in Europe before coming to America. But I first sang to success in your country—my country—and Europe later accepted me, accepted America's judgment. But about that début. I was so young; sixteen is the youngest I guess anybody ever tried to sing a big rôle in a big city. That night was the best in all my life. Never afterward was I so thrilled, not for all the ovations, not for all the money fees. To have conquered, to feel the power I had over the people on the other side of the footlights, to know that I had done my part. Ah," and as she spoke her eyes dimmed with tears

and she seemed again the young miss of sixteen, bowing to the plaudits. She came back to herself with a start——

"Twenty-five years later I repeated my success in "Lucia" on the same stage, but what a different and greater name was Patti, eh?

"After the début I went to Europe. London, then Birmingham, then Brussels, then into the heart of Italy. For many years I toured Europe. But it was no easy task. Each city had to be separately and individually won. But they *were* won.

"It was easy—that part of it. I never really needed to study. Trills, roulades, chromatics came naturally. I worked hard, but I might have saved the effort.

"I was never worried about a performance. I would as soon talk all day and never think of my performance until my maid said: 'Are you ready, madame?' "

Said I: "Those were days of triumph, Mme. Patti—in all the past, in the present, nothing was ever known to compare with them. Kings, dukes, emperors, worshiped at your feet."

The baroness smiled.

"I remember the little Grand Duke of Russia. One day he came to me weeping. 'Mother won't let me hear you sing "Juliet" any more, because the other morning I wrote a love letter to Juliet and slept with it under my pillow.' "

"Everybody was in love with you, Baroness," I

ventured. "Every bachelor measured love in terms of Patti."

"And some measured their fortunes, my dear, in terms of Patti's income," added the Baroness with a sigh and a dry smile. "That is how many would-be wooers wooed. They liked Patti's $5,000 a night. So divined my first husband, the Marquis of Caux, equerry to Napoleon. The dear soul needed to repair his battered estates, so he set siege to my heart. And I, overcome by his wiles, responded. It was a terrible mistake for Patti. The Marquis gambled frightfully. An old roué, he took my money and made life pretty miserable for me, for eighteen years, for he wouldn't give me up. Patti smiled at her audiences all that time, but she was not happy, you see, despite her fame and success.

"Then came Nicolini. Him I loved and married in the truest sense of the word. We sang together, toured together, and I almost died when he passed out. Oh, dear! . . . But the dear Cederstrom, he has made these later years really happy. Come, I will show you some old mementos."

We were now looking over old pictures, photos and clippings, sketches and manuscripts. "Look," cried Patti, "there's the manuscript of the forty-fifth opera that was written for me. I've had every kind of subject from Eve to Joan of Arc, French to South African."

As the diva spoke, she kept turning over the keepsakes.

"Ah, here's my first copy of "Home, Sweet Home." My dear, will you believe me when I tell you that this simple little melody was far more successful for me than even my sensational technical grand opera arias? At the end of a program, when I had won my listeners with my fire, I sent them home softly weeping with my heart songs. I love it . . . listen," and she hummed a few bars and accompanied herself at the piano.

"Here's a man who positively cheated me out of twenty thousand dollars. And he did it in such a way that I could say nothing. Ah, here's a program of my Farewell Tour of America——"

"Which one?" I asked slyly.

"Now, now," she said with her finger lifted in warning, "remember that I couldn't help it, if, after I had decided I *had* made my farewell, the people insisted I go back—and that I wanted to go back. But my farewell has been made; the last farewell, eh?

"Oh, there's Colonel Mapleson. Dear old Mapleson. How smooth and gallant and eloquent! He'd lose a fortune for me and make me think he'd suffered terribly. He was my manager, you know. He was the impresario at the Academy of Music in the banner days of opera. The Metropolitan Opera Company was running under Abbey. Nilsson was the big star of their company. She was a lovely artist. Mapleson declared war by bringing me back. Some nights things didn't go as we wanted. Maple-

son would go down on his knees and kiss my hand, and who could be angry with him?

"They say that Mapleson owed a decorator a considerable bill and the man was in a fury. But Mapleson talked to him and before the creditor left he had loaned Mapleson a hundred dollars. That was a character you won't find again—the old barnstorming type of manager. He was a case! But I love the memory of him. I love the memory of all that has passed. I love the life and the friends I have made in this little career of mine. But mainly I love the voices of new stars who have come after me—singers who are now making people happy."

The baroness sat there on the divan, her hands folded peacefully in her lap. Suddenly she gave a jump and laughed aloud.

"I remember one time your aunt was traveling with me in the west of the United States. We were eating our supper when we were dumped into an embankment. Your aunt was a great humorist. She said laconically: 'Well . . . here we are.' I've never forgotten it," she said, and she laughed. "There's much wisdom in that. No matter, up or down, success or failure, rich or poor, young or old. Then the beginning of my career, now its end. What of it? All we can do is smile, and remark with your aunt, 'Here we are, here we are.' "

An interesting book is that of Herman Klein, "The Reign of Patti," which deserves to be read.

V

FACE TO FACE WITH CÉSAR FRANCK

1822–1890

IF you would come with me to-day, you must set aside all thoughts of worldly things, of wealth and fame, of feats to astonish the imagination, of empty tricks of showmanship, of all that you have learned to associate with men of popularity. You will not be overwhelmed by eloquence, or suave etiquette—you will not see the dressed idol of crowds. I am going to bring you to meet a very ordinary man, as ordinary as the apostles, a very unbecoming, shabby, ugly commoner, as shabby and ugly as Lincoln. If you do not like such uninteresting people, you had better not come, then you will not be disappointed.

Look down the Paris street at the group approaching us. Who seems to be the man of the crowd?

I pick him out for you. You are surprised. He is very ordinary, is he not? This elderly man with the shaggy, ill-kept, gray sidewhiskers, dressed queerly in the long coat several sizes too large, the

trousers too short—that is he. Bushy eyebrows, large nose, round face, chin clean shaven, eyes of calm, what is there about the man, except that he appears below the average of respectability? He walks rather fast for his short legs and gestures a great deal as he talks.

His name, César Franck, you know him, citizen of Paris? No? Perhaps not. Ask a dozen men, the answer would be about the same. One might remember him as a music teacher, another might say organist, and one might have a faint impression that he wrote some music, not successfully.

I am perfectly truthful about him, so if you do not like such folk, perhaps you had better not come along. Though let me tell you, that if you do join us, be very careful what you say, for there are those who would tear you to bits if you so much as cast a single aspersion upon him.

This, my friends, is the Church of St. Clotilde. Hush, we will enter. High is the vaulted roof, silent the grayish atmosphere. Figures angelic are carven in the walls, and glasses stained with pictured history of the church sift in the sanctified light of the outer world. You cannot talk aloud, you feel yourself to be so humble in the unmistakable presence of the Great Spirit. If churches do no more, they make you realize the infinity of something. Soft light, echoing silences, and the pipes of the organ near the altar.

What voice is that which almost as soft as the

silence filters down through the church and trembles like an angel's wing? The organ! Praying and sobbing with a pulse and a breathing like a majestic overpowering priest who is the spirit of the church itself. He seems to be standing aloft, his head drooping—the walls are his arms and legs, the ceiling is his shoulders and his head is the organ loft. He is singing and chanting to his Maker.

Up there in the organ loft is the maker of this music, the master of that organ, who for thirty-two years has been its mind and heart. Do you dare to meet him face to face? That angelic being, that father priestly—that Father Franck?

We will find the way to the organ loft. As steep as the path to Paradise itself is the spiral staircase. An occasional porthole (as in a ship) lets in a bashful glimmer of light as you climb aloft. Suddenly you encounter a dreadful, ominous beast, which is panting like a horrid creature of the jungle. Be not afraid; it is the bellows of the organ. And now to the final section of our pilgrim's progress —to the console of the organ, to the seat of the organist. This is pitch black. You stumble up a few narrow steps——

"Shh—hush, shh——"

Half a dozen angry faces appear out of the light above you. Fingers to their lips, they adjure you to silence—the Master plays. We stand stock still, suspended, as it were, half way between the pavement and the vaulted roof.

The face of the organist—look! A streak of white light falls on the features which are lit with a radiance resembling a halo. I have never seen such a near approach to a halo as that light about the face of César Franck as he plays the organ at the Church of Saint Clotilde. His rolling white hair, brushed back from his expansive brow, his noble mouth drawn to restrain the sobs which are rising in his breast. His hands, long, slender, graceful, trembling with the spirit of the *vox humana.* So he improvises to the end, this genius of improvisation. The Saint of French Music they name him among the little set, and he looks just that.

"So you will see, good boys," he slowly speaks, pausing and turning to the listeners—his voice is low-pitched like a viola—"that I have finished a new work, which is something quite beautiful."

"Magnificent, master," cries Vincent d'Indy, his favorite pupil. "Magnificent beyond all human idea."

César Franck shakes his head with modest deprecation of this outburst, and his face assumes an expression of simple goodness.

"No, boy, it is beautiful, but not beyond human idea. At least, I hope not," he smiles—then with a sudden gesture, "and what do you think of last night? Wasn't that fine? And the public is beginning to understand me, and I am only sixty-eight."

"Dear master," says d'Indy fervently, "the pub-

lic will understand you, and finally give you the credit you deserve, never you fear."

"I do not fear, my boy; I have never feared. I do not write to be understood, but for the art itself. I give the music which is given to me without thought of what will happen afterwards. That's what art is for," Franck soliloquizes.

"Dear master, you never think of yourself. It is not right; you are all for art's sake, that is your life. Why, last night, when the public applauded for you, we couldn't get you to bow for the longest time."

"Did you think that applause *was* for me? No, no, of course not. Do you *mean* it? I thought it was for the magnificent playing of the quartette—they did so well. If it was for me, then—then, truly you are right in saying the public is beginning to understand me. You remember the other concert you boys arranged for me, how well it sounded?"

"Master, why do you persist in saying that?" and the little group looked at each other in embarrassment. "The performance was abominable—your music wasn't given justice. The conductor was——"

"Tut, tut, you boys are too exacting entirely. For my part, it was delightful."

"Well, if you will have it so, what can we do? You are so generous. But anyway, last night was great. Nobody can deny that, eh, boys," and d'Indy drew the others closer. "What do you think the

master told them at home, when they asked him whether the public applauded, what do you think he said?"

Before the boys could suggest, César Franck blurted out, "I told them it sounded well, and that the musicians were excellent, just as I thought it would be."

"There he is—never thinking about himself. When will you think about yourself?"

César Franck stroked his whiskers. "Myself? Why, myself? People think too much of themselves. They do not know what it means to serve an ideal. Why, look you, boys, there have been those who would make me give up my work with you and resign from this church. They say, 'Then you would be free to do your own work.' Do not be afraid. Ha, ha! I will not do it. I love to teach. I give you boys six to eight lessons every day. That is fine. I hope always to do it to the day I die. And this organ—why I love it here. My own work! I get up at six every morning, boys, and do my work for two hours. That is enough for me. After that I rush from one pupil to another, always in a hurry; there's little time and much to be done. My own work is best done early in the morning—that's a fine time to write music, when the sun is beginning to shine!"

All this has been going on, while we have been standing silent. Now we come forward to greet César Franck, telling him how we have been moved

by his music, how deeply we love his playing of the organ.

"You love my playing of the organ! If you only knew how I love that instrument. It is so supple beneath my fingers and so responsive to my will. I love it; well, almost as much as I love these boys of mine, my pupils, my future great musicians. Ah, you will make your names famous, won't you—but more to the point—you will keep clean the escutcheons of art, yes? You will not let the high ideals be forgotten, yes?

"You will notice my pupils are a little different from many other musicians, friend. There is less rush about them for the public clamor. Now I, in my time, never sought for public favor. My people were disappointed in me for that. They wanted me to be a concert pianist—it was all arranged that my career would be a second Liszt career. My father, when I was a little lad, decided to make me a musician. He was a banker; very strange he should have desired a musician in the family, wasn't it, but he loved art. He took me on a tour of Belgium when I was eleven. I am a Waloon, you know, not a real Frenchman, though I am naturalized, and I hope I am a good Frenchman, now, eh? I was born in Liége, one of a long line of Francks. One of my ancestors was a fine painter. At the conservatory I was entered and I went through it for a few years when I was suddenly taken out. Why? I'll tell you. My father had

decided to arrange a concert tour—he was going to make me famous—to meet the King of Belgium, present my boyish compositions, and get the King's blessings——"

"Master, don't forget the contests at the conservatory. Ah, tell them about your winning. Oh, he won't do it. But I'll tell you," said d'Indy. "He entered for the prize in pianoforte playing. After playing a difficult concerto, he tried the sight-reading test, doing it in a difficult transposition. The jury was amazed and would have passed him by, except that old Cherubini understood and awarded him a special prize. Then there was the contest in organ playing——"

"No, no. I will not hear that," said César Franck. "Those are youthful exploits best forgotten. They were tricks of music, and I despise tricks. That is why I repudiated my concert career with horror and disgust. This is my place, this organ loft, where I have spent most of my life. Here is peace and sanctity. Here is where I have worked out my ambitious music of the "Beatitudes," my best oratorio.

"However, I will tell you one story of my mistake, when I thought to appeal to officialdom for help. The "Beatitudes" I knew was my best effort. I thought, I will invite the minister of fine arts and the directors of the conservatory to a private performance at my home. My pupils learned the parts and we rehearsed feverishly, remember, boys? The

evening of the private hearing we waited to start. First came a note of regret from the minister. He was too busy—he went to a hear a light comedy of music at the Comique. Then came other notes of regret. And we performed the "Beatitudes" for ourselves. My only bid for public help. I suppose because of that I was honored with a ribbon from the academy, for my being a professor of organ, but not composer. I was old enough to have known better than do what I did," and César Franck smiled with such an air of innocence that we felt as if we could fall at his feet and worship him as well as the God of the Church.

"I must have you meet my son. A good boy. His mother and I started life under terrible hardships. She was an actress and we did not like actresses, I mean the boy's grandparents didn't like them. We were very poor, my wife and I. The Revolution was raging in Paris, and to get to Church we had to climb over barricades. But we arrived. And we have fought—not together—and we have lived. Pardon, a moment please——"

And César Franck jots down some notes. (He often does that during his lessons, a pupil explains.) d'Indy takes us aside and whispers, "You can't imagine how wonderful he is, how good, how saintly. And so much misunderstood. Why, honestly, so many laugh at him, this Messiah of music. One time a certain popular organist was persuaded to play a César Franck prelude. Our dear master was over-

joyed. He listened to that man reading it over at rehearsal. He played some wrong notes. Master meekly said, 'Pardon, those ought—ought—to be natural not sharp.' The quack turned to Master and said, 'Hush, if I play it at all that is good enough for you!' Think of that. A few people understand —those who count. We will not let the ideals he has fought for be forgotten. We carry his banner aloft. Ah, by the way, it might be interesting for you to know the story about master's beautiful 'Redemption.' When it was to be performed we found that the orchestral parts were full of errors. Franck was distraught and time was pressing. I proposed, in union with my comrades, Henri Duparc and Camile Benoit, to take charge of the task of correcting them and Franck accepted the offer frankly, for he did not have the time to assume the responsibility of doing it himself. He was too busy with his lessons. We were frightened at the manual labor to be done in so short a time. However, we went to work bravely and I looked after the copies. Kept awake by Duparc's cognac and Benoit's puns, we completed the work in a day and two nights, and the parts were on the desks at the appointed hour.

"You know if he didn't criticize himself so much, if he were not so conscientious, he could have written so much more. Tell the people about this unselfish man; why when I think how much his inferiors receive, and he—But, hush—Yes, Master, what is it?"

"I must listen to that on the organ. Tell me how it sounds."

And the voice of the organ sang out, and filtered down through the heavenly atmosphere to the pavement and followed us out into the street.

Thus we left the saint of French music, the spiritual heir of Bach, the truest of artists, who never wrote an idle measure, who never sacrificed an ideal for any motive.

So you will understand why we cautioned you that you must forget all worldly things in approaching César Franck. Remember him with the light upon his shoulders.

. . . . . .

A little while after this imaginary meeting, César Franck met with an accident which resulted in his death. He lingered a while in his bed, and continued to write until the end.

Important works: "The Beatitudes," Violin Sonata, Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, "Ruth," "The Redemption," "Rebecca," "Psyche," "Symphony in D Minor," "Les Djinns." He wrote one opera, "Hulda," and an incomplete one, "Ghisele."

Books about the composer: Biographies by Vincent d'Indy, Destranges, and Derepas.

VI

FACE TO FACE WITH FIELD[1]

1782–1837

FOR the longest time I had been trying to find a pianist who played the music of John Field. Some of the best artists didn't even know the name. This was before I spoke with Edwin Hughes, who, loving the gentle lyrics of the piano, paid homage to him. One day I determined to force a book of Field's "Nocturnes" on a friend, and when he could not refuse, demanded that he read the music at the piano. He played one and murmured: "Delightful." He played another, and soon had forgotten my presence entirely—he finished the book of twelve.

"How is it," he asked me, "that such beautiful classics are so little known?"

"You see," I tried to explain, "Field was the predecessor to Chopin, and the immortal Pole imitated the Irishman's ideas—that is, he took the

[1] See "Face to Face with Chopin," *Face to Face with Great Musicians,* First Group.

forms and wrote perfect classics. The Pole was greater, but the Irishman, nevertheless, was great. You will be surprised to know that Field's music was played by Chopin, Liszt, Moscheles, Clementi, and all the greatest performers of past days. Field was the lion of the day.

"He bridged the era between Clementi and Chopin. In Russia he taught the later famous Glinka, Neate, Mayer, and Mari Scymanowski. His work was the forerunner of all the songs without words, ballades, impromptus, and fantasies. He was the originator, the thinker, but it was left to Chopin, Liszt, and others to perfect his forms. Such a splendid commentator as Rupert Hughes says: 'Much of Chopin's glory belongs to Field.' He was indeed, as I remarked, quite the lion of the day. . . . I had it from John Field himself."

"You had it from Field himself! What do you mean?" asked the pianist.

"Forget the present; forget to-day; let us travel back and away from our homes to——"

Moscow, 1835. Looking into a window, we espied John Field at a piano. He was bundled up in a great bear skin cloak, shivering with cold, although the day was quite mild. At his throat an open collar permitted the rise and fall of a pronounced Adam's apple. Around the collar a ribbon-like tie was wound several times. The face thin, emaciated, dissipated, was still handsome. A cleft chin, a semblance of beard on the under part of the

jaws, the hair curly; brown, large, friendly eyes; long, prominent nose; lovely cupid's bow lips; a distinguished-looking face, with a slight trace of his Irish nationality. Sitting erect and motionless at the piano, the long, thin fingers were moving.

For several moments we watched him. He was playing a single passage over and over. As he finished the movement he would take a little poker chip from out a box, then play again, and as he finished, another chip, and so on, as though he were playing to empty the box in which there were not less than 200 chips. Once or twice he would place a chip on each of his hands as he played, moving only the fingers, that the chips would not fall off, and they didn't.

We knocked at the door, and heard in Russian, "Come and be welcome." We made our introductions in English.

"And it's English you speak," said John Field with the taste of a likable brogue. "So long is it since I heard my native tongue that a foreigner myself I've become almost. And you're straight from the place where they speak in a man's language and not a jargon of beasts. Indeed, I've learned the moujik and the cossack and the French and the Italian mixtures. Perhaps if my life had turned into the jungle, I'd be able to carry on a conversation to perfection with a family of apes.

"Ah, sit you down, speakers of English. And how did you come to visit me? By accident, you

say. Sure 'tis a pretty accident. Had you not heard of my death—twice it is already that I've read my own obituaries, and mighty complimentary encomiums they paid me. I've felt like a disembodied spirit many's the time. Once in order to prove myself living I wrote: 'The report of the famous John Field's death is unfounded. This great virtuoso still lives and Europe need not yet renounce the opportunity of hearing the wonder-artist.'

"Well, you're a sight for my two good-looking eyes," to which we responded that we trusted he would have many more such pleasant sights. "More power to you for such a good wish and it's myself wishes the same. Oh, for a peep at the dirtiest hole in Dublin, 'twould be like a glimpse of Paradise to my soul. Indeed, isn't it strange that an Irishman should be called the Russian Field by his own people, and isn't it a bit of the devil's own irony that here I should be with a lot of Russian musicians kowtowing to me?

"Och, and what would my father and the old granddad say to this? What say you? There was I in Dublin town a-born. When I squealed my infantile yowls, it interrupted the violin-practice of my dad, and I had to get the habit of crying in tune, which I did. The father played at the principal theater, and had all of the most fashionable folks for his pupils. Young son was soon made to feel the importance of music, to the merry tune

of the lash. It could never be said of the Fields that they spared the lash and spoiled the child. Father was not alone in his care of my habits and musical uplift; he was ably assisted by his father, my revered grandparent, who, for the love of me and my future, added the notes of his own substantial hand over my pants. Being perhaps not yet of a truly musical nature, my boyish frame resented the double-dealing whippings of my ancestors, and I fled from the town to make my own way.

"For two weeks I fought it out trying to find a way of fooling nature, by eating nothing or less. Then a wee voice spoke from my inside upwards and it said: 'Better take your lickings, boy, than starve to death.' So I went back, fully prepared for all that was coming. And if you'll believe me I got it. But, indeed, I would have you understand, the good family was not mean, but well-meaning. They wanted me to be somebody. So along came Glordani and I studied piano, and soon Dublin was made aware of the presence of John Field, prodigy pianist, the wonder boy of eight to appear at the theater assisted by So-and-so, singer. I was really ten, but it sounded more romantic to say eight. About this time I wrote my first arrangement, the highly poetical theme of 'Go and Shake Yourself,' with which I started as a composer. Shortly after we all of us went and shook ourselves, for Dublin's theater could no longer support the Fields, and Bath was attempted, soon given up, and London faced

the prospect of entertaining us and furnishing food and lodging for a thrifty family of musicians.

"Now, father was soon anxious to get me off his hands, as you can't blame him. So I was apprenticed to the house of Clementi & Co., makers of pianos. Old Muzio Clementi took me under his wing and taught me all he knew. Greatest pianist who ever lived I say of Clementi, and he rather liked me, too. Good pupil, soon billed me to appear in concerts—ten-year-old wonder—another little romantic idea, for I was then close on to fifteen. In between studying, playing, and composing, I sold pianos. 'Customer,' one of the clerks would yell. 'Oh, Johnny, come and play something to show the beauties of this wonderful piano,' and I would play some rattling popular air to please the lady and gentleman who were going to buy.

"Soon Clementi decided it would be a nice idea to tour the continent, both of us playing. And a good idea it was. We hit Paris, Vienna, and other cities and always struck luck. Then into St. Petersburg, where the master decided to stick. Being a good business man, he opened a piano showroom and invited Petersburg to hear us without cost, thus making many a good sale and many a good crown. Now, Clementi was a fine teacher and good friend to me. He didn't like to see me a spendthrift or extravagant, you see. So I got practically nothing except my board and keep. I was getting in need of clothes. I hadn't any for a couple of years and

I'd been growing a bit in the meantime. The coat was a little out at the elbows, but that didn't make so much difference, for when I played, the cuffs moved up to the elbows. The clothes hadn't shrunk, but I hadn't either. A pretty sight I was then, twenty-two, pale and sick and a beggar. Not a word of anything but the King's English with all the jargon around me. Some said the master was jealous of me—that was all rot. Pretty soon, Clementi decided to move back and I felt I'd stay where I was. So Clementi gave me a piano—it was very lovely of him to do it. Of course I gave him a concerto, a quintet, a few little nocturnes, which he published. But it was all right and very nice, and mighty glad I was.

"Now see me in new clothes, new friends, being made the guest of General Markeloffsky (all of that), and soon I was the lion of the city. Concerts, composing, teaching—one of my lads was Glinka, who's done some fine work himself. The ladies particularly liked me. They liked my Irish manner, and the soft, tender music of my nocturnes, and my songs without words, and my concertos. They would applaud, and I begged them, 'Not too loud.'

"I would stop and wait for dead silence, and sulk when there was any moving about. With it all I was shy and bashful. Along came imitators of my music, Chopin, a young Polish fellow, who plays with the manner of a sick-room. He copied my music, but bothered me not. Chopin, some say he's

a comer. Huh! I don't think much of those who can only imitate. But how can he or anybody else change my reputation? It's history and that it is.

"I was a gay Bohemian, petted and coaxed, and I naturally became indolent and frivolous. Along came a pretty bit of a woman, a little actress of France, a Mademoiselle Percheron. Sure enough I proposed, like a fool. And sure enough she accepted me; and I married her. The minister was a Mr. Sybruck, and the best man was one Jones; and soon there was a little lad who died, poor dear. (Soon Madame Field got tired of my strange ways, and left; and so did I; and so we parted.)

"Well, God save us all, I covered the continent with concerts, and the continent covered me with glory and money, which I threw away, and drank up and ruined myself.

"A couple of years ago I found myself one morning in bed, in a hospital in Naples. I was dying, no two ways about it; and they were asking me my last questions. 'Are you a Catholic?' 'No,' says I (recalling that my father had been forced to change his religion by popular demand of the natives of Dublin). 'Are you a Protestant?' 'No,' says I. 'Are you a Calvinist?' 'No,' says I, 'I'm no Calvinist.' 'Well, what are you then?' Says I, 'I'm just a plain pianist.'

"I would have died in Naples, but along came Russians—Russia again to the rescue of Ireland—and they paid for me and took me back to Moscow.

This was the provision: I was to spend the rest of my life in Russia, where they said I belonged. So, here I am, and, faith, what wouldn't I give for a peep at old Dublin town? The dirtiest hole in the filthiest part of the city would be Paradise to my eyes, and I'd write a nocturne out of the littlest snatch of an Irish song, for the gladness of the heart it would bring me."

Field's "Book of Nocturnes" mentioned above is still procurable, as are his sonatas, polonaises, quintette for strings and pianos, grand waltzes, variations on Russian airs, capriccioses, rondos, divertissments, pianoforte exercises, etc. Perhaps his Fourth Concerto was his most popular.
Books about the composer: A splendid essay by Liszt.

VII

FACE TO FACE WITH DONIZETTI

1797–1848

THIS time our way led us into spacious grounds, surrounded by high walls through whose heavy gates we rode to the forbidding house. Curious persons were seated on the porch and on the benches in the garden—like a scene from Doré. Our guide put his finger to his lips as if to silence us. We moved along long halls, through an avenue of bewildering specimens of humanity. First there were women, dressed in gray, straight, cheap dresses. Some moved up to us to plead, to argue, to threaten. A tall, stony-faced woman marched majestically past, her head lifted, her finger pointing majestically before her—as if parading in her court. An old, misshapen creature sat upon the floor and nursed an imaginary infant. A beautiful, sad-eyed mother shrieked at us to "save her son, save him, he is going to ruin with her." Turned to the wall, one woman stood in endless silence. Swearing and vile epithets were flung from a hard-faced little thing, who stood with her fists

upon her hips, her head flung in defiance at a mocking world.

We shrank back from the miserable sights, and passed again into another ward, where only men were gathered. Most of them sat with their heads buried in their hands, but some were moving violently up and down, like lions caged and ferocious. Misery, hardship, morbidity were written in the bare blank walls. A little fellow sidled up to us, hands clasped and raised in pleading, "Oh, get me out. Please, save me. Save me." The guard thrust him aside violently and winked coarsely at us. A big giant of a hulking mass stood, assumed the pose of an orator, and began a speech upon religion. At last the guard pointed to an open door. "There," he whispered.

We moved softly to look in. It was a small room. All alone a man was standing at the window, looking out on the world.

He moaned, "Donizetti is dead; poor Donizetti is dead."

Here was the picture: The man was of medium height and slender. A large face, fringed by a beard displayed a neatly trimmed mustache, a curiously bumpy, lengthy nose, and a forehead almost covered by the thin hair which was combed down to the eyebrows. He could have been no more than fifty, but there was about the face an expression which seemed to tell of eons of time he really had lived. He looked not like his portraits, but more resembled

the caricatures which formerly had helped to make people laugh at Donizetti.

We coughed, very slightly; he turned, with a kindly look in his great eyes, a glance as of inquiry. "Our good Donizetti——" we started.

Instantly the face clouded, the eyes grew tear dimmed, and he shook his head despairingly and advanced with his hands raised mournfully as if breaking sad news. "Donizetti? Oh! good friends, Donizetti is dead, don't you know? He died a long time ago, almost—no, not before I was born; but he is dead, I know. I am sure of that, poor Donizetti!"

What a tragic thing was this! How could we talk with him? How could one bring that sad man back to himself? To make the attempt I asked:

"You knew Donizetti?"

"Knew him?" At this he became almost buoyant. "Ah! I was his best friend. I was with him always. I saw him from the day he was born until"—his face became clouded and he seemed unable to collect his ideas—"when was it he died? I can't quite remember. Did you know Donizetti? Maybe he is not dead. What do you say—Tell me! Tell me! Tell me!" He fell on his knees before us, pleading. We lifted him up.

"You need not fear; I am sure he is living," I started.

"No." His manner changed again; he was emphatic. "No, you are wrong, Donizetti is dead. I

saw him lying there and lowered into the grave, into the grave. Oh! how terrible! But—but ah! they had a great funeral in Bergamo; and they loved him, all the people. I saw a great funeral procession; four thousand people followed him, weeping and crying, for he was a great man. Yes, they said that Donizetti was the most famous fellow who had ever carried the name of Bergamo around the world. Do you know why they said he was so famous? He was a wonderful—ah! what was it he did? I forget. He did something beautiful—something to do with tears and sighs; something to do with merry laughter—I used to see him working. Let me try to remember. He would sit there—and it would make you feel so—What was it? What was it he did?"

"Wasn't it music?" we suggested softly.

"So it was; yes, that's right, the bright beautiful music, which they sang and played. We used to dance to it, and in the opera houses they had the name of Donizetti in tremendous letters, and everybody from the king down came to hear. They made him a court composer and gave him royal honors and—and I ask you—isn't it too terrible that he should have died in all that—but wait. Is he dead? Tell me, please, don't fool me, say he is not dead." Again he sank to his knees and again we lifted him up.

"He is living," I said, and then on a chance, "Do you know, you look very much like him?"

The man bent over and clapped his hands. "I was thinking that, too. Isn't that funny? Ha, ha! I look like Donizetti, that is funny! That is good —but wait. Do you remember how he looked? I can't quite recall, can you?"

"Yes," I said very slowly.

"He had a beard around the edge of his face"—the man felt his beard and exultingly nodded with a childish excitement—"He had a mustache"—the same nod—"a long bumpy nose. His hair grew over his forehead—in short, look in the mirror."

"I do look like him, don't I?" he said staring at his likeness.

"And what if you were really Donizetti?"

"Suppose I were, but that can't be, because Donizetti is dead; no, don't you understand—but yet—who am I, anyway? Am I dead, too?"

At this moment, impelled by a curious idea—a strange inspiration—we helped the poor creature to a chair, indicated that all must be silent, closed the door, drew down the blinds, indicated the rise of a stage curtain and softly hummed "Una Furtiva Lagrima" ("One Furtive Tear") from his "L'Elisir d'Amore." To the strains of that deeply moving melody he straightened up, pleased, and appeared to awaken somewhat to understanding. But not quite. "Rataplan" we then sang, that stirring song from his "Daughter of the Regiment," until the fifes and drums could be heard in the imaginary distance, and the mark-time of the soldiers shook the room. He

sat up, the strangely bewildered Donizetti, somewhat like his own *Sergeant Sulpice*, and immediately marched around the room following us, beating an imaginary drum, singing "Rataplan."

"Why, that's Donizetti, that's his music. He isn't dead. He's here—he's I. I—I, Donizetti. Oh, God."

He straightened up, a more determined glance came in his eyes, he looked at us piercingly. Understanding had returned. Donizetti was himself again. Reason once more entered the tired, sad brain.

"Now it is all clear to me. Why—God! I have been insane. The thing I often feared in thoughts of horror has come to pass. . . . Thank you for this salvation. I am saved. It is godlike of you to have visited me like this and to have opened a light in my brain. Often I used to say: 'I will go mad.' I foresaw it when those streaks of melancholy took possession of me, when the paralysis first bore me down.

"Think of it, I have imagined myself dead! Is anything more tragic? What a delusion—What a theme for an opera! An opera such as only I might have written. Like my "Lucia"—yes, that's what it would be. I could do it even now—in a few hours."

"You will do it," I said to him, taking his hand. "You're better now. It needed just this sort of awakening. You'll get out. We will announce your

resurrection, you will be welcomed back. There will——"

He shook his head. "That is all over—Donizetti is as good as dead. I lived so much in the years of my life, worked so hard, went so fast, that is what brought me here, I guess. You can't fool nature. Sixty-seven operas in thirty years—there's a record for you. How many did Bellini write—my so-called great rival? How many did Rossini write, my so-called model? They said I imitated him. I did model after him at first, but not when I learned my own power. With me to write an opera was less trouble than most of those other fellows had to write a single song.

"I will prove to you this fact. In Venice a theater manager said to me: 'If only you could bring me a new opera like you only can do, I could save my house—otherwise I am ruined.' I said I would save it, and I did with the "The Sonnet of the Night." I had no libretto, no idea, no book—so I made my own idea, my own book, my own libretto, did the songs, the orchestration, trained the singers, put on the opera. How long do you think it took—a month? Nine days altogether——

"You think that is wonderful? That is nothing, I did another opera in two days. You sang before, didn't you, from "L'Elisir d'Amore," ha? I'll tell you a little anecdote of that opera. All done in fifteen days!

"And "La Favorita"—the last act with "Spirto

gentil," the grand triumph of all tenors—here is a story. I called on a friend. He knew I liked coffee. I did very much. He said, 'Stay for some coffee.' I said, 'Thank you'—but just as he brought the coffee to me, the idea for "Spirto gentil" came to me. I said, 'Go away, my friend; leave me with the coffee.' He came back two hours later. 'See, here is the end of "La Favorita," ' and I sang it for him myself."

"But you had no piano there," we said.

"Piano was never used in composition. I just wrote it down from my head; moreover, never corrected it. The first copy was always used.

"Good people, only music which came to me I thought worth while when it was free and untrammeled. Figured out and studied, it is no longer music—but scientific matter for geometricians. I despise workers, plodders, figurers in music. To me spontaneity is the great thing. Just look at me, in my family music was as foreign as German blood. My father was a weaver, he had about as much love of music as this keeper in the house. Listen——"

Donizetti whispered—"If I start to sing the keeper gets mad.

"A lawyer for a son was my father's ambition; mine was to study music. Now how did I get the music? Where did it come from? It was divinely inspired. While I was supposed to be reading law books, I was taking lessons from some good friends who showed me how to sing, how to play violin,

organ, pianoforte, flute, double bass, and how to write music. I would go up to their place and play truant from school.

"My father heard about it, the Dean had written to him about my defection. 'My son,' he said emphatically, 'you are to be lawyer.' I said, equally firmly, 'Father, I am going to write music.' When two beloved relations are of two different minds there is one thing to do. One must leave the other. So I joined the army to escape all further importunities of the law . . . that put me out of reach of Dad and the law.

"The army was quartered at Venice. While in the tent one night an idea for a great opera came to me! Zip, I was writing it, and, in a fortnight, I had completed "Enrico di Borgogna." I was then twenty-two. It was produced and made a nice success, enough to encourage me to go on surely.

"But then entered something I had never thought about—a girl. Her name was Virginie Vasselli." Donizetti paused. He put his hand in his vest pocket and took out a picture and looked at it and showed it to us, while his hands trembled. "It was love at first sight—a combination of uniform and musician could win any girl, even with a nose like mine. She was so pretty, too, so sweet and so genuine. But Father Vasselli saw no reason why his daughter should marry a fellow with such an uncertain future as mine in music. Bah, he stormed at us. That made me mad. So I boiled out a few

operas, and made some money, won my discharge from the army, and married Virginie under Papa Vasselli's and Papa Donizetti's very noses, both of which were very large. Virginie and I lived happily—never a bit of trouble, my friends, for fifteen years. I had come into pretty good notice with my "Falegname," which was the real cause for my being discharged from the army. I was very successful. My wife and I were divinely happy. Recognition came from everywhere, and calls for my writing. You can imagine how hard I had to work. You can imagine writing nearly three operas a year, working with the directors, picking the casts, often heading the rehearsals and traveling around. But I thought I could keep it up. You can't fool nature, though, you see it in me. Along came my "Lucia da Lammermoor"—and such a fight among coloraturas for the honor of singing it! I left Naples mad clean through because the censors forbade my "Poliuto" and in Paris I brought out my "Daughter of the Regiment." When I came back from Rome, I was made Master of the Imperial Chapel. Then came the great change in my style—it is true that for a long time I wrote in the style of Rossini, in his manner, but of course all my melodies were original. But with "Lucrezia Borgia," I branched out and made a new style of opera. I received tokens of regard from the Pope and the Sultan of Turkey—and I was really getting so much money I didn't know what to do with it. My wife and I were like two

lovers all of that time.[1] I never changed in my feelings toward her—not even now. Then the grim reaper came in and murdered our home. From the day of my wife's death I was a different fellow, things took on a grimmer aspect; I didn't like to smile, melancholy fits overtook me, and so it went for eight years more. I had dreadful headaches. A year ago something happened here, something very queer, something snapped; no more music, no more ideas, no more work."

He rose unsteadily to his feet, and looked about the room, then put out his hands to us as a drowning man might do. The eyes grew filmy. The voice grew thicker. He was going, the respite had been brief. He continued to speak.

"Yes, something happened. Donizetti died.

"Did you say that Donizetti had not died? I say that he did. He died a long, long time ago, years and years ago—he was my friend—and I saw him buried with tears and moanings in his own little native town of Bergamo. They honored him. His name used to be on signs. Isn't it sad, my friends? He did something very wonderful during his life. What was it? Something of beauty which made people weep and cry and laugh and smile—something that reached down here in your heart. Some-

[1] This is rather contradictory to the story, which has been given much circulation and is published in Lombroso's *Genius*, that Donizetti was in the habit of beating his wife. The story is that after such an episode he would go back to his score and write a tender love-song.

thing you feel strangely about—what—what was it?"

He looked mournfully at us and moved to the window.

"Ah, but Donizetti is dead; too bad, poor Donizetti is dead."

Important works of Donizetti: Of the nearly seventy Donizetti operas, those which still hold the boards, and will remain for all posterity, are these: "L'Elisir d'Amore," "La Favorita," "Linda da Chamounix," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Anna Bolena," "Don Pasquale," "Daughter of the Regiment," "Lucrezia Borgia."

He also left some splendid masses, a requiem, cantatas, and many string quartettes, as well as songs.

Book about the composer: Biography by Cicconatti.

VIII

FACE TO FACE WITH AUBER

1782–1871

"PASS monsieur the vinegar," the old gentleman remarked. "Perhaps it will help him to digest his food the better."

It was in the home of Daniel Francois Esprit Auber. At the long straight-carved table Auber sat at the head, and the two of us vast distances away, at the foot directly facing him, while the rest of the intervening board was bare. Standing behind the composer like a sentinel was the master valet. Behind each of us who were the guests were other sentinel servants. At each side of the table stood others. Never a word did the servants speak, merely waiting like automatons, watching for the plate to be emptied. Coming from the kitchen were two others who conveyed the trays to the dining-room, and handed the food to the sentinel servants and passed out.

The room was large and cold in its atmosphere. Age was written over everything. It was in truth a

reflection of the master's person. Himself, the master was white-haired with a strip of beard down the cheeks. His face was thin, with prominent cheek-bones, thin compressed lips, the upper one being particularly long, giving him a marked resemblance to an Irishman. But he was Parisian to his finger-tips, in his manner of speech and action. Delicate and small, retiring and overly modest, one would scarcely suspect him to be the master of French operatic music, though a certain power and nobility appeared in his precision of thought and words. It was easy to judge his age. That wrinkled, pale face was the insignia of ninety or more years. That bent, trembling body was the characteristic of the nonagenarian's. Very, very old, the vulgar might have remarked that he was flirting with the undertaker, with one foot in the grave. Not that there was anything senile or aimless about him; indeed, wisdom and dignity were written on the brow, and the calm kindliness of peace was present to smile upon the closing days.

Yes, the pattern of the master was the spirit of the house. Old age was there over everything. It was in the room and its decorations, under which heading should be included the decorations, the almost lifeless servants. They were white-haired and bearded, stooping and decrepit, slow-moving and antiquated.

The furniture while substantial looked to be in its senility. The pictures were faded, the hangings

were discolored and of a former splendor. From the stairs, a creaking, asthmatic sound arose when any foot touched them. From every corner in every room strange faces of old folks seemed peering at the visitor. From the kitchen one occasionally heard the cracked laughter of the cook and his assistant.

The end of life. The nursery of the children of the new era.

So the master was reflected in his house.

"We're all here to-night—my boys and I," Auber informed us with a gesture that included the domestics. "You, my friends and guests, are lucky. Many times when visitors call upon me, all the servants are away and I go out for my supper. Once the director of the library came at my invitation. But I couldn't find a soul to give us food, so we sent to the hotel. But to-night it seems to be a celebration. What's the matter, boys? They're all here." Auber winks at us. "You would think I am master in my own house, so? I'm not! But they just do as they like. That's because they know I'm a mere boy alongside of them and they can't have much respect for a stripling.

"Here's Jac, the baby of the family—he's seventy-five, been with me over thirty years. This is Valentin behind my chair—he's the real master of the house. I don't dare do a thing against his orders. Booh, Valentin, would exterminate me. He'd leave me. And that would be death for me. Sometimes a visitor calls. 'All right. I will see him,'

I say. 'No,' Valentin reproves. 'We are too busy. We are composing something that must be done now. We cannot be interrupted. Make it a day after to-morrow.' I look at my music. I *am busy*. I *am composing*. I must *not* be interrupted. I glance at Valentin. His face is adamant. I say: 'Very well, we will see him a day after to-morrow.'

"By the way, note how hard my eight men work. I eat one meal a day and my bed must be put in order. I sit at night at my piano, writing my music. Sometimes I fall fast asleep over the keyboard. Ink falls on the keys; they must be cleaned. Sometimes they are—but they haven't been for several weeks. Hard work for these boys. But why should they exert themselves?

"Pass the vinegar to monsieur; it will help him digest his food the better."

At each fresh outburst at the expense of the servants Auber looks at them and laughs. But they are imperturbable; there they stand like sphinxes, with never a smile—never a word.

"They have a very good time when ladies call on me. Then they always go out. They say I prefer being alone with the ladies—the rascals. Jac has on a very big amour. Look at him blush! He's been calling on his lady love for the last fifty years, and I understand he's almost made up his mind to propose to her. Jac wonders why I haven't married. He's worried about it. Maybe if I get old enough I may decide to take the chance. The other day

Jac asked me: 'Master, are you not sorry you didn't marry?' I looked very seriously at him and said: 'Don't you know that if I had married, Mme. Auber would now be over eighty, and my tastes run to the younger element around eighteen?'

"I'm young; look at me. I'm spry. I'm still in my full senses. A while ago at a reception a lady picked a white hair off my shoulder. 'H'm,' said I, 'that white-haired old man over there must have brushed next to me.' The lady looked at me. She murmured, 'It must be hard to get old.' 'Well,' said I, 'up to now it has been thought the only way one may live a long time.' Well, I didn't really start to live until I grew older than most babies.

"I am almost what might be called an example of delayed maturity. I didn't really get started in my profession until I was thirty-seven years old, and then my opera was but coldly received. You see it was something like this. My people were in trade, a very high-class business. My father was an art dealer, and related to the King's official decorator. Father's house sold pictures and charged a whole lot for frames. He wanted me to learn all about frames and pictures, and I was articled off as apprentice to a French firm in London. It was the only time I ever left Paris. I went there, but we didn't get along very well. So when the Treaty of Amiens was signed I came back home, and never went out of Paris again. Think of it! My whole

life has been spent in this city, and it's all I ever wanted. It's been excitement enough for me. A little too much. Many have been the offers for me to go abroad, but no, I would never leave my beloved city. I have seen two emperors live and die. I have watched all Europe undergo revolutionary changes. I have seen that little nation over the waters become a world power—the United States of America. I have, with tears in my heart, seen the Prussian outside our gate while we held on to our city. The Siege of Paris could not send me in retreat. I held on here—with my boys. We lost two of our family, two dear servants. My horses, Almaviva and Figaro—they were killed to provide food for the soldiers. We all cried when we lost them. . . . But as I was saying I couldn't leave Paris. Once my physician said I needed change of air. Five days away from Paris almost sent me to my death. I came rushing back.

"How did I get into music? As a lad I learned piano. I was very sentimental. I wrote ballades at eight. I was just an amateur. But when I returned to Paris after my London experience, I determined, though my father objected, to go in for music. . . . There was a certain famous 'cellist, named Lemarre. I wrote some sonatas for him. Now, he was a fine musician, but couldn't compose. Said he: 'Auber, those sonatas sound as if I wrote them.' Said I: 'Very well, they'll be signed with your name. You give me whatever they bring.' But, having Le-

marre's name he decided to give me none of the money. . . . That was one experience. Then I revised some scores. One of these was heard by the great Cherubini, director of the Conservatory. He was a queer one, terribly cross and sharp, but inwardly kind and soft. 'Young man, you are talented. Come with me and I will make you really worth while.' My father, hearing this comment by the foremost musician in Europe, decided to forego his ambition to have me a good tradesman and he allowed me to become Cherubini's pupil in the Conservatory.

"When I think back, way back to the day I first went into that queer old building, where for the last twenty-nine years I myself have been the director, I can scarcely believe it. That little fellow and I, the old man, are one and the same creature!

"I studied, but not very much. I wrote, but not very carefully. Then something happened. My father died intestate and I found unless I busied myself I'd be a poverty ward of the state. It was a good awakening.

"An opera I would write. But a book—a book—my kingdom for a book! Nobody wanted to entrust a poem to a young stripling knownothing. I went to everybody. They laughed at me. There was one who was very popular, a Mr. Planard. I called and called at his house. Finally one day I won the ear of Mme. Planard and she persuaded her dear husband to 'try out' the young Auber. Thus

luck had it that at last I should start. . . . The second opera was successful.

"Soon afterward I made my partnership with Scribe. Without him I never would have succeeded. With him came what you know of my ascendancy. Would it be interesting to you to know how we joined company and made our immortal partnership? Scribe, then very famous, was writing for the Varieties, and one day there came to me a note. 'Dear Monsieur: If you would permit me to use your rondo it would assure my act a success.' I had never met Scribe, but I answered. 'Thank you. I am very simple but if I can help you, I am happy; if you would like the rondo and the singer, whose pretty voice and face might help to make it go, use them all!' "

At the mention of his collaborator of twenty years, Auber's face had clouded.

Supper was over; Auber rose, and as he did . . . we followed him into the inner room. A large chair was placed close to the little square piano. "You see that chair. That's Scribe's. . . . That was Scribe's—Gone, gone . . . Well. . . ."

We glanced at the piano—the keys, sure enough, were stained with ink-spots. Valentin informed us on a later occasion that the master sat up until dawn writing, falling asleep in his chair. He never had more than three hours' rest a day and, as he had said, not more than one meal. Stoical old gentleman, Auber.

"This chair," said Auber reverently, "was Scribe's favorite. He would come here night after night. 'Well, what harvest to-day?' he'd ask—for each day in my carriage in the park I gave birth to my themes. I would play him my music (for I always wrote the melody I wanted—he gave the words) and he would listen intently. In a few moments he would write the words to fit. It was wonderful. He would catch the spirit of the melody in an instant.

"I'll never forget the way Scribe carried on the week before "La Muette" was produced. You know that was our biggest hit—outside of "Fra Diavolo." It was quite different; the heroine was a dancer. She didn't sing at all. The Emperor was quite happy about "Muette" because it helped him get his throne by inciting the people to revolution. So the Emperor made me director of the Court Concerts, but on the promise not to repeat "Muette," for fear it would start other revolutions! And later when it was performed it actually did do that very thing. But when "Muette" was first produced everything was splendid.

"Two days before the production, the overture hadn't been written. 'Auber, Auber, we are ruined,' Scribe stormed. 'Don't come around to-night,' I said calmly. Next morning he was at the house before six. He broke into my room, right here. I was fast asleep in all my clothes. The overture was written. I woke at the sound of his entrance. 'Well, Scribe, the opera is saved. Take the score

and parts down to the orchestra and let them rehearse it all day!' "

"Didn't you go down to hear it played?" we asked in surprise.

"No, siree! Not for me. I never went to a performance of an opera of mine all my life."

"Never conducted?"

"Worse still! I couldn't ever get my courage screwed up to that point. I can't stand the sight of audiences, and I disdain their applause. . . . I used to like to hear Rossini's "Barber of Seville." One night when I went over to the theater, to my dismay the Barber had been taken off and my "Masaniello" substituted. I ran out of the theater. No, I couldn't stand watching my music being performed and heard."

Here Auber became quite vehement, shaking his head and excitedly raising his voice.

"You said that you had never been out of Paris. If that is so, where did you get that atmosphere of Naples? Where in the world did you find that stirring Italian march?"

"In my shaving mug! Right in the bottom of the dish. I found it while shaving. I looked, and there it was! That's where many of my most inspiring melodies were hidden. I would look and turn the soap and I'd find something. When I die I will give you that mug."

At this point Valentin, the eldest valet, appeared. He looked hard at the master with never a word.

But Auber understood. He translated Valentin's expression.

"Valentin says it is time to retire. I will show you to your rooms. Valentin doesn't like me to keep up my friends too late. . . . Once, after one of my premières, I had invited the principals to a late supper at a hotel. Valentin came along. I noticed Valentin looking at me, as if to say, 'Let them go home. It's too late.' So I called for the check. 'Waiter,' I said, 'I've forgotten my wallet. I'm Mr. Auber.' 'You may be that, but I must be paid!' I rushed Valentin to my notary. The notary arrived an hour later. He gave me the money. Then I said, 'Ah, now I know, my wallet is in my overcoat.' So I paid back the notary. . . . Ha, ha, I knew the wallet was there all the time. But it gave me another hour with the company. It was a trick I put up on Valentin. Now, here is your room. To-morrow I will take you over to the Conservatory and let you hear the students at bleeding hour. You will hear many of them shrieking. No, we're not slaughtering them—that comes at the début.

"I will tell you a secret. I never should have been head of the Conservatory. I've never been severe enough—too easy-going. Ah, but they're fine fellows—those students—great geniuses among them.

"There's Valentin again. All right . . . all right, Valentin. You would think I am master here,

but I'm not; it's Valentin who is master in this house. Good night."

The important works of Auber are: "Manon Lescaut," "Fra Diavolo," "The Black Domino," "Rèves d'Amour," "L'Enfant Prodigue," "La Bergère Chatelaine," "Zanetta," "Les Diamants de la Couronne," "La Sirène," "Zerline," and "Haydée."

IX

FACE TO FACE WITH SCHUBERT

1797–1828

ONE of those old German beer-gardens—the sky overhead and the grass underfoot. Drinking, laughing, telling of stories. Steins lifted in endless toasts. Fat old ladies and red-faced young gentlemen. Travelers, townspeople, the waiter in his white apron bending over and listening to the orders and pocketing the occasional tips with a broad grin.

As tourists, we had wandered into the quaint, vine-clad arbor which framed the garden, and had noted the peculiar charm which inhabited the place and its patrons.

The table next us had been vacant, but it seemed unquestioned that we were going to have company, and not the sort to our taste. For there approached down the aisle a fellow who made straight for the empty table. I say he was not the kind of person we particularly cared to have near us. He looked the companion of very questionable gentry. He was

clumsy above all things, either intentionally, or from a pure stupidity. He almost stumbled down the pebbled path, narrowly escaping a glass which stood near the edge of our table and hitting into a waiter with a full tray in his hand, apologizing boorishly and shamefacedly.

When he approached the vacant seat, the newcomer dropped into it, as though overjoyed to have come to a haven of safety. He was thoroughly embarrassed, we could see that, and then it came upon us that he was trying to escape the inevitable glances of the guests. He probably thought he was observed by all, whereas it was quite plain that very few had even noticed his approach. His round, puffy face was red as an apple; he mopped his low forehead and puckered his great thick lips, as if trying to whistle a tune in abandon. Seated where we were, we had an opportunity to study our new neighbor and to observe what good there might be in this thoroughly repulsive-looking creature. Tourists are inquisitive beings, they are most discourteous and unpardonable, they seem to feel that all the earth is meat for their curiosity. Being of the brood, we were so thoroughly enamored of our quest that we failed to realize how we must have impressed others, and we stared at the newcomer with a freedom which in others would have shocked us beyond words. We were sightseeing, and here was a type. He was not above five feet, it seemed, very stocky, round-shouldered, with heavy arms and legs. He

lifted the beer to his lips with stodgy, short fingers. Heavy spectacles gave an unfavorable appearance to his eyes, which had the typical haziness of the weak-sighted. One redeeming feature was his hair. It gave a certain distinction to his make-up at the same time it accentuated his ugliness. A shock of it. It's texture was curly, almost like a negro's. Something of the negro mold to his nose and lips made us wonder, but no; he was as blond as any of us.

But look, he had fallen asleep. Tired out, poor wretch; his eyes closed, the menu in his hand. But no, we were mistaken, for the fellow had taken a pencil from his pocket and was writing something on his menu card. Rapidly and with a sureness of manner and absolute conviction, as one might do in copying a sentence he knew by heart from long association with it. We broke all rules of etiquette, and glanced over our neighbor's shoulder.

"But what do you think?" one of us whispered. "What do you think he is writing?"

"An order for the grocer," another chuckled, "a letter—a love letter. . . ."

"No! You'd never think it of the man. It's music. Music!"

Sure enough, the uncouth, ugly gentleman was writing music. He never stopped for one moment, until the card was covered from top to bottom with tiny notes. He had forgotten his surroundings, forgotten everybody, forgotten his self-consciousness

and was writing with such an expression on his face that we were overwhelmed by it. An expression was written on the awkward, ill-carved features which might have illumined the face of a preacher, delivering a sermon of divine inspiration.

Now it so happened that we were on a tour, the main purpose of which was to visit the celebrities and historical places associated with music. Perhaps, perhaps here was an unknown genius, perhaps such a flower as has been described by Gray in his "Elegy in a Country Churchyard."

"I beg your pardon, sir," I said with an apologetic bow, when I saw he had finished, "we are musicians; we hope we are not offending you. Perhaps you would show us what you have written in such a romantic, off-hand manner. Perhaps we might do something for you. We are from abroad and . . ."

Later, we thought what idiots we had been, talking in a patronizing manner to him, to Schubert!

But the man colored. He looked about him with an expression that said, "Oh, if I could only get away from here!" Yet he smiled and nodded his head boyishly, and handed us the card. The thing was exquisite, adorable, a creation and an invention of supreme beauty.

"That's a lovely theme," we said to him. "Is it your own, did it just come to you? What is it for? How did you study? Where are you living?" Our questions piled one on another.

He looked at us with pleading in his eyes. And

then, as if by a preconceived plan, we all arose and in a way of homage, begged him to join us at our table, as we might have invited a prince. And he; well somehow, he changed, too, it seemed, and became a very different sort, with a charm of manner that illumined his face.

"What is this music for?" we asked him.

"A—what you might call a song," he responded with a bashful smile. "It's to a little poem. You have heard it, maybe. "Who Is Sylvia" it is called."

No, we hadn't the pleasure of knowing it. Would he recite it to us?

"Well, I'm not much on that sort of thing. But I can give you the words:

'Who is Sylvia? What is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair and wise is she,
The Heavens such grace did lend her
That adored she might be . . .'

"Isn't that lovely? Since first I read it, I've been all aflame with the beauty of it. Only a few seconds ago, when I was passing here, I caught the melody; it rang in my ears, back and forth, and I had to come in here at once and write it down. I hope I didn't look all that I felt."

"Inspiration is a God-given thing, which does not wait on time or place, even a beer-garden!" we suggested.

"This garden, it is very dear to me, because it has been the birthplace of many of my songs. There is a strange effect on me here. This might be called my inspiration garden. Oftentimes I come in here to catch the spirit of the people—to listen to their laughs, to watch their faces. I worship them from afar. I do not often mingle like this, with grand folks; oh, do not raise your hands in horror. I do not mock. I know. I am but a poor, out-of-the-way singer. I've never made enough on my music to keep me in bread and butter. No, and we've always been poor. My father was poor, our family was large; we ate when we could. My mother was a cook, my father a school teacher; but we all loved music. We had our little orchestra in the house. Ah, when I think back of it, how many could have gone through with it? I can't remember when I ever had a complete outfit of clothes on my back. When I bought a new hat, the shoes were worn out; and by the time I could afford new shoes, the coat was gone. One of my ambitions had been that some day I could have a completely new outfit. I laugh now at my boyhood experience. When I went to the conservatory at the age of eleven, they mocked me because I was dressed in such a poor jacket, with such a funny pattern. Ah, but do not think I am making objections. No, what matters it? I write my music, not to sell it, but to keep it. Why, there have been times when I couldn't afford to buy music paper to write down my thoughts; that's the sad

part of it, to lose music which comes to you. Melodies flying everywhere, on breezes, on rivers, in poems, and all unchained. And it is for us and for me to put them down. A very famous publisher looked over some music and said, 'We'll publish this, but we can't pay you; we'll give you some copies.' Very well, I let it go that way. Anything to get it out to people!"

As our newly found friend talked in an embarrassed way, he expanded and grew; there came a new spiritual light in his person, so that the rough, brutal exterior melted away. He was supremely musical; in the way he spoke a rhythm and melody were apparent. A simplicity about him was adorable; he was the most unaffected and modest creature we had ever seen. As we moved away from the garden and walked toward the town where we had invited him to come to our rooms at the hotel, we found him child-like, simple, open-hearted, generous, and hopeful, despite his poverty.

"You write much?" we asked him.

"Well, so far I've composed three hundred songs, some operas, some symphonies, and I'm not—how old do you think I am? Right, right first time; twenty-seven. Every morning I write my best, before I eat my breakfast. All through the night a poem has been with me, say, or an idea for a symphony or something of the sort, and then it all flashes to me as I dress." (All this in a breathless voice, the ideas flooding one on top of another.)

"They say of me, that I had inborn in me the theories of music. One teacher said—it will sound immodest of me to tell you—but he said 'I cannot teach you. God has given you everything.' Well, it sounds so egotistical to say it, but I never worked over a song or a composition of any sort. I never wrote except when I simply wrote down what came into me flying.

"Now I remember especially a poem of Goethe's. The "Erlking," you know. 'Who rides so fast through night and wind? It is the father and his child. . . .' You know, how the child is ill, and the father is rushing with him to the doctor, and he goes through the forest, and the dying child sees visions of the Erlking who seems to be calling him to remain behind. The father tries to comfort the child, but the Erlking and his daughters are seductive and draw the child to them, and when the father comes out of the forest, he finds his child is dead. You know that. I read it once, the poem, and I became ill, excited. I heard in my head strangely unearthly music. I wrote it down. I never changed it, never once.

"One time, in a beer-cellar, not so nice as the garden we were in—there it is dirty, and noisy and children whom I love, but noisy. A friend was there with me and had a volume of poems and I was looking at one. Then I said, 'If I only had a piece of paper I could write a pretty melody which is in my head.' I got it, and jotted down a

little thing called "The Serenade." This is how it goes. . . ."

By all that is holy! The melody he sang was enchanted. It was never equaled for beauty and tenderness. "The Serenade"—the Serenade of Schubert, created in a noisy rathskeller! We did not know how to talk to him.

"We came to this city to find Beethoven," we said in a broken voice, "and we have found Schubert."

"Beethoven, ah! yes. You are going to see him? What a marvel! Think of it—here I've been all my life within a stone's throw of Beethoven's house, and I couldn't get up enough courage to call. Many times I've wondered, what's the use of writing? There's Beethoven and after what he does, everything else is pygmy."

"You don't mean to say you never saw him!" we gasped.

"Oh, I see him when I watch him in the streets. You mean up close? Once I did. A friend arranged it. When I went into the room, I felt, well, how can I express it? I will whisper it, for fear I might be sacrilegious. I felt as I might feel if some one brought me into a room and said 'Here is God.' Please forgive me, Lord, if I sin. But that is how I felt. I was shaking like a leaf; I stammered; I was awkward; I was like a lump of lead, a fool, a dumb ox. Oh, how could I be so? Beethoven greeted me kindly; I didn't realize it. He read over

my manuscript, and then he handed me a piece of paper to write down the answers to his questions. He is stone deaf, you know. I took the pencil, but my hand was trembling so, I couldn't write. Oh, what a fool I was! I thought he was scolding me; I couldn't understand a thing. They told me that he was suggesting something about the harmonic effects of what I had written, and commending the melodies. I thought he said 'No good—no good.' I went out like a beaten child, like a dunce from the school, like a convict from the judge, chagrined, hurt, ready to end my life.

"That was my experience before Beethoven, and I've never had the strength to go back. Sure, it's silly. I have heard that Beethoven has said some very nice things about my songs. Suppose it should not be true? I don't want to take a chance."

He stood there, his hands clasped many times as he emphasized a point, his head on one side, and his voice coming rhythmically, singing, almost. Like a young child, unspoiled, like a girl at times, who is afraid; and then at times speaking in a thunderous accent that could not be taken for anything but that of a strong man.

"Once, when I was about twenty, I heard one of Weber's new operas, and I said it was no good. I knew it; my inner sense told me so. Anything that the great von Weber wrote used to be acclaimed irrespective of its real merits. So gossips carried my 'impertinence' to him. He must have been wild,

for he stormed, 'Let that fool write something before he criticizes me!' I don't know where I got the courage or the audacity. Sometimes when I think of what I did, I can't believe it was I. I went right up to Weber's house, with my opera "Alphonse" under my arm, and bearded the lion in the den. I remember how he received me and the argument we had. He had me almost in tears, when he espied the manuscript. 'Here, let me see what you can do. Is that yours?' He played it, and looked at me, and took me by the hand and said, 'You can criticize me whenever you like, if you will come and bring your music for me to hear. Let us be friends!' Wasn't that nice of him? He even tried to get it produced for me. Getting operas produced is not easy. I sent one score to the managers of the opera house, and after a year I thought maybe they would have some word about it. I called and they handed me the score; it had never been opened. Wasn't that nice of them?"

When Schubert finished with us that day we begged him to come again. Several times, in our visit, we watched him in his different moods; never sullen, never sulky, never despondent except over the things of life outside of himself. He had, in reality, a singularly sunny disposition which, like the sun, often gave place to the tears of rainy weather. Despite his next day's rent being due, he was able to eulogize beauty. Despite the poverty about him, he was living always in heaven. Once

we asked him if he had ever been in love. He blushed.

"I am always in love—but—well, I have never been fortunate enough, that is to say, lucky enough, to have found a sweetheart who could—well, you see me, there's nothing very attractive about this face to make a girl fond of; you can't expect any one to want to live with a pauper who writes before breakfast, with so little breakfast to eat. . . . Well, no; I never let myself fall in love with some one, some *one* except . . ."

He bit his lip and laughed a bit hysterically.

"Except once. You know I think I've told you that I was employed by the Esterhazys, the count, you know. It was nice there, nice to have a bed so soft and so sweet, and nice to have food. There was one daughter. Caroline. Ah! It would have been very unfair of me to make love to one so beautiful and so much above me, when I was there and being paid and fed. Besides, how could she have thought of me seriously? I was—I was so much in love with her. She walked in a flood of music, in a dazzling halo of melody. I kept it all to myself, although, at nights when I was alone in my room, I would close my eyes and I would bring her back in my imagination, and then I would tell her and then she would listen and she seemed not to mind me and my station, and how ugly. Ah, those nights, those love scenes of my imagination. I never told her, my friends. But once I almost let her know.

She had asked me in a pretty, petulant way, 'But Schubert, you never dedicate any of your music to me, and you do to so many other ladies.' I tried to be gay, I tried to quiet the trembling of my lips. 'Fraülein,' I said, 'how should I do that, when *all* my music is dedicated to you!' She looked at me . . . I dropped my head . . . for months I tried to fathom what was in her look. Was it a sneer? Was it a gay burst of laughter? Was it surprise? I could close my eyes and force the scene back to my imagination, so that I could catch the expression. I knew her face by heart. Sometimes I thought it showed a little gladness and an eagerness, as if to say, 'Yes, yes, Schubert, and what else have you to say?' But I brushed that aside and I never spoke so to her again."

He turned away his head to hide the glistening in his eye. To change the subject so painful to him, we said, "Please listen to this music. Tell us what you think of it." He sat down and was all attention as we played one of the songs of Ossian.

"Very pretty, very pretty," he said. "Who wrote it?"

We looked to see if he were serious. "Don't you know?" we asked in astonishment.

"No. Who did it? It's very pretty, isn't it?" he repeated in bewilderment.

"Why, you did, Schubert; you wrote it. Come and look at it."

"So I did. Well, isn't that foolish? I've had that

happen before. You see it is like this when I write. I am in a frenzy. The song, or whatever it is, just comes out at white heat. I am exhausted when it is finished. I can scarcely keep up the pace. It is just a great climax always. So when it is finished, a few days later I have forgotten it. I'm funny, don't you think?"

Funny? No, not funny. Sweet and lovable, beautiful soul. When we saw you no more, and when we had learned to know you as you were, in your divine songs, we finally came to an estimate of your noble reality, and your real nobility.

So this was Franz Peter Schubert, who composed in his life six hundred songs and many other compositions of greatness; and who died, the possessor of six pieces of clothes and some old manuscripts, at the age of thirty-one; and then was buried a few graves away from the giant Beethoven. Their bones mingle in the dust and their songs will throb forever in the distant centuries a million years from to-day.

The most important works of Schubert are his songs. They are all masterpieces. This was his sphere; but still he has left his impress in other branches of the art, with his "Unfinished Symphony," "Moment Musicale;" his overtures, particularly to "Rosamund;" his choral and operatic works.

Books about the composer: Biographies by von Hellborn, Audley, Frost, Friedlander, Duncan, Niggli, Barbedette.

X

FACE TO FACE WITH BALFE

1808–1870

IN Hertfordshire, as you swing along the shaded roads, you forget every care and settle down to an utter enjoyment of the glories of Nature.

At my side was an old country esquire of the gentility, voluble and given to spreading information entirely free. He had vouchsafed for me all the facts of the neighboring country, from its history to its present state of usefulness.

One could listen to him and not mind it. You could look at the scenery and forget the human. So quite unconsciously I started to whistle in a break of his talk.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Just a little tune—you know it. Let me see. Oh, yes, 'I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls.' "

"The "Bohemian Girl," I'll bet," he chuckled. "Tell you something funny. Another strange idea. Who wrote that opera?"

"Michael Balfe," I suggested.

"Quite right," he answered. "Where does Balfe live? You don't know—of course you don't. Well, he lives right over there; has his country home."

At that I jumped. "How far? Take me over, I must meet him," I said in all impatience.

"Steady, my boy, steady. Thought that would surprise you. Want to see him,—well, you wait until the first rainy day and come over to me and my daughter will take you over to meet Mr. Balfe."

"Why wait until it rains? I'll go now."

"Better wait, my boy. On rainy nights the old fellow talks—his family gather around the porch. My girl and one or two others sit in on the circle and listen to Balfe's stories."

Then it was wait for rain. Never was I so much in sympathy with the farmers. I literally prayed for rain. But sunny days were with us. At last clouds overhung the sky, and toward dusk the heavy drops were pelting the parched earth. Boots, oil-skins and a lamp, and over to the esquire's house I traveled. Missie was waiting for me.

"Thought you'd forgotten," she laughed. "I hadn't, and besides to-night he's going to tell us about himself. Let's hurry, I wouldn't miss a word."

Sure enough there on the porch of the house, in a dim light, sat several people around an elderly man. I thought of the stories of Charles Dickens, remembering particularly old Mr. Pegotty, as I looked at the central figure, Michael Balfe. A fine,

fresh, rosy-skinned face, fringed with a single rim of beard, which ran around his countenance, under his chin and met the hair at either ear. He was smiling and at the sight of us, he greeted, "Ah, Missie, I thought you'd forgotten our rainy night club. So you brought your musical friend. That's good for him, maybe. For to-night, the story is about me.

"So prepare for adventure which will make your hearts go cold and thrill you from the start——"

"Sounds like an advertisement of a dime novel," said a young woman, Balfe's daughter. "And so it is."

"Chapter one: It is in Dublin town. Mr. Balfe, the violinist and his beautiful wife announce a son, christened Michael. Of course, there was rejoicing at the birth of a great musician and operatic composer, for Papa was always sure of my destiny. He started at once, before I left my crib, to instruct me in the rudiments of my future art, and soon after presented me with a violin and lessons therewith. I began to fiddle at three, to sing at four, and to compose at seven. Young Michael was a very apt pupil and soon was showing Dad what he didn't know, so that Professor Meadows was retained at the astounding sum of a shilling a lesson.

"Determined to demonstrate the ease of writing grand operas, young Michael wrote a piece for Professor Meadow's Grand Dublin band, which was played and the seven-year-old boy listened to it with delight. It wasn't bad either. It was called "Young

Fanny"—and I used it later, years later in a comedy, "Paul Roy." Papa Balfe understood the omen and couldn't contain himself. Villagers proclaimed me as a second Mozart. And one day I came riding home in a goat carriage which had been given me by admiring friends. I was the village wonder to them. And another time I was late for lunch—and lunch was simply a sacred affair in our house. I had carried home a heavy boat which one boy who couldn't do music but could make boats had forced on me.

"But I lose the style of my novel of adventure. The young Balfe, now reached to the manly age of nine, was transferred to an even more celebrated teacher than Professor Meadows, one O'Rourke, Irish and obdurate, pounding information where necessary. But the pounding wasn't necessary because the whole gamut of instruments of band and orchestra were within the easy reach of the youthful musician. And a song, scarcely of youthful title, "The Lover's Mistake," had come from the infant's heart.

"Witness the boy's delight—My friends, I like to look back at myself as a boy, for I love that boy as my own son with all his mistakes and ambitions; it's a different being than myself—he went to the theater and heard "The Lover's Mistake" done beautifully and the audience applauding. He was excited, you can imagine, and he turned to the people near him, with, 'Think of it, I wrote that, I wrote that.'

But they, knowing that such a thing was impossible, told the boy to 'shut up his trap' and called him a young fool. But a publisher was more kindly. He published the music, and sent the composer twenty copies absolutely free, so that the composer could look at them and admire them and see his name in print—all of which was thoroughly satisfactory, especially to the publisher, who made a considerable sum out of the arrangement.

"Chapter two: Here we come to the wild adventure. One day there arrived at our home a strange gentleman, who had but recently arrived from the West Indies. He came with a message from uncle, a Mr. McNally, who had made a fortune in that country and had asked 'this ambassador' to see his relatives and perhaps recommend if anything would make them happier. Well, the ambassador was very kindly received, and the thought of the wealthy uncle, who might remember us in his will, appealed to the folks, who showered attentions on the grumpy old ambassador man. Except myself. I liked him but I had fun with him and teased him and forgot entirely that a bad impression concerning me might be conveyed to Mr. McNally by his emissary. But soon the visit ended and then the queer old gentleman proposed just one thing—to carry me to the Indies and make me a rich man. It had been Mr. McNally himself, and myself was all that he cared for in Dublin. But I didn't go.

"Then afterwards I was sorry, because my father

died and I had to support my mother, and what could I do? What could I do? So thinking, I left my house one day, shortly after my father's death. I passed the playhouse, noticed a placard, 'Mr. Charles Horn, the distinguished singer, will make his last appearance before returning to London.' London, I thought, oh—oh—oh, if only I could go to London, my fame would be made. So, in true Irish fashion, I marched into the star's dressing room, this foolish boy as I was, and said, 'Mr. Horn, you are going to London; you will need a helper, perhaps a boy violinist, a bootblack, an errand boy.' He looked at me, and said just as quickly, 'I do need some one. If you are serious, let me hear you play, and then have your parents call on me tonight and I will sign articles.' My mother was sorry to loose me, but London loomed. Dramatic, isn't it? Rather like a real novel, eh? But wait there's more."

"Go on, go on," the listeners urged.

"In London, I became Horn's right hand—played solos at the oratorio concert, writing little songs, and soon started to sing myself. Those were days, flying away, with all the prodigality of a young blood. I would call on a friend and leave a song. One gentleman came to see the wisdom of inviting me for supper—he would suggest that I scribble a song—and he was selling my efforts. I never realized how much he loved me, until one time he told me I must spend six days with him and try myself out as an

operatic writer. If I could write an opera in six days, why there was a pound for me. That was easy to win, you bet. He paid me the pound, and to my amazement, several weeks after I heard the opera, with my good friend on the program as the composer. I wonder if the pound was too much to have paid, or if the opera was only worth the dinners?

"Chapter the—next. One day, shortly after my attempt to sing in grand opera at the age of seventeen, which opera, to tell the truth, ended in a failure, I walked into a hotel, into the arms of a gentleman. He was tall, handsome, Italian, and he wept as he embraced me, calling me, 'My son, my son, I have found you!' It took me some time to assure him that I was the son of the Balfes of Dublin and not of the Count and Countess Marezza of Venice, Italy. Now, it appears that the noble family had lost a son, of whom I was the identical picture. Marezza, wealthy and a lover of music, offered to take me home, to study, and to live the life of a gentleman.

"His wife would love me, he would love me—the offer appealed to my romantic nature, and I went as his son. It was like a scene from out the fairy tales when we arrived at the castle, which was to be mine, he said, just as if I were really his son. It was a magnificent place, many acres of ground, hundreds of attendants. When we entered the big hall, the Countess Marezza was sleeping in a chair.

She was beautiful, looked like my own mother—I sat at her feet; the Count watched the effect. When she woke and saw me she too cried, 'My son, my son,' and would scarcely believe that it was Michael Balfe in truth and not young Marezza.

"Missie, you must ask me to tell you some time of the days in Venice and the tricks I played on the ecclesiastics during carnival time, and of my romances with the Italian ladies—that is if your daddy will not mind. All this was while I was studying for the opera and doing very nicely with my own compositions. My benefactor arranged for me to sing for Rossini—and I did Rossini's "Largo al factotum" for him. The little fat fellow, kind of a comedian in his way, but king of the opera of the day, was delighted and soon, witness young Balfe, violinist, composer, and now chief baritone of the Italian Opera at Paris. See him singing principal parts in operas with Grisi and Malbran.

"Let me tell you a story. One time I was to sing in Sicily, but I completely forgot the date. I was having a merry time in Venice with the ladies and my good patrons. As I woke one morning, it suddenly came to me: To-night I am to sing in Sicily. Immediately I packed—it would take me a week traveling, and I would probably be thrown into jail when I arrived for breach of contract, but I would see it through. I intended to be honest. In my hurry I forgot that I owed some debts. There were several trifling bills unpaid. I was jogging along

in the coach, when that came to me, coupled with the fact that in the rush I hadn't a single coin in my pocket. Now, who says that adventure is dead? A man in a big black cloak was sitting opposite me, his eyes glued on me. Suddenly he handed me an envelope. I opened it. My bills. 'I am instructed to collect these bills, sir,' he said.

" 'I am sorry,' I stammered, 'I have nothing. I will have something in a little while when I get back.' 'I am instructed to collect now,' the stranger insisted, whereupon he handed me another envelope. I opened it with a cold shiver, and discovered inside —one thousand francs. 'What does this mean?' I hoarsely asked. 'A friend, a nameless friend. But he wants you to remember—always—to pay your bills.' My debts amounted to six hundred and twenty francs and I had enough left to carry me over the journey. In Sicily I found the opera season had been postponed three weeks so that I was quite early for rehearsals! So I was all right after all. Don't you call that fate? I do—I believe in it.

"All along you notice that I was being aided by foreigners. Yet later I fell into real trouble with an Englishman. He was trying to manage two opera houses at once—one at Milan and one at Naples and he discharged me. He didn't know an Englishman could sing, being English himself, but Rossini sustained me.

"Rossini urged me to write for the opera. He

told me I could be the Rossini of England, if I would but try. And I did. So witness now, the budding composer of real operas.

"Next off to England and now comes Chapter the last. I wrote the "Siege of Rochelle." It was a success. One melody became known as "Balfe's Air" and wherever I went it was dinned into my ears. One day I was introduced to a French lady who wished to know if I was Mr. Balfe of the air—she thought I owned the atmosphere!

"Ambitious, and eager to help England's national music, I founded a National Opera Theater, to produce operas by Englishmen and in English. It failed —Englishmen did not respond—they wanted to have foreigners bring their foreign sounding names and customs into the British Isles. So that experience ended my patriotic efforts for the promotion of British music.

"Henceforth solid work for Balfe, now the operatic composer. Have you ever heard of the "Bohemian Girl"? For that came next in my record of thirty-one operas. Did you like it when first you heard it? It was my greatest success, and strange to say, nobody ever condemned it or said anything against it. That was really too good to be true. Alfred Bunn was my librettist, Bunn, the greatest poet of our day.

"While I was no longer manager of the theater, I nevertheless was able to make suggestions to those in charge. One of those recommendations was the

removal of an obnoxious conductor. This gentleman was in the wings during a rehearsal of one of my new overtures. He sneered and said that the music was impossible to play. I contradicted him and he, thinking to rout me, said, 'Perhaps you will play it yourself'—upon which I jumped down and played the violin part to the finish. That ended my friend. I had not studied violin at three for nothing!

"That musician then was almost as uncomfortable as I was years before when I slept in a mysterious house. Along with several young men, we arrived at a little town and proceeded to the first available 'inn.' The lady in charge seemed very much worried, but told us she would put us up for the night. Three of the boys were put in one room, I in another. Next morning I learned to my horror that I had slept with a corpse. The lady's husband had died during the preceding day, and in order not to lose me for a boarder, she had carefully tucked her husband in the closet. When I thought of the sensation I might have had if I had opened that door I shiver.

"Well, folks, have you had enough for to-night? Missie, haven't you had enough? You're wide-eyed —I must have scared you with that story."

"Oh, no, Mr. Balfe," said Missie, "but I'm wishing there's more like it. I like to be thrilled and shocked. Isn't there an epilogue to this novel of adventure?"

"Simply the epilogue of the old man, tired out but happy waiting for the end, that's all Missie."

"There's something else that *I* can add though," said Balfe's daughter. "You've heard about Michael Balfe's life, and you know his music, and you know that once he sang and played, but you've never heard him do it. Come inside and we'll persuade him to end this rainy night with a violin and a baritone concert. Come on, father—come on, Mike —come on, Count Marezza. There's a dear. Isn't he sweet and obliging?"

Most popular selections of Balfe are to be found in the opera "The Bohemian Girl," "I Dreamt That I Dwelt in Marble Halls," "The Heart Bowed Down," "Then You'll Remember Me." Others of his best works are: "The Maid of Artois," "The Talisman," "The Rose of Castile," "Geraldine," "The Siege of Rochelle," "The Enchantress," "The Puritan's Daughter," and his version of "Falstaff."

Books about the composer: Biographies by C. L. Kenny and W. A. Barrett.

XI

FACE TO FACE WITH ABT

1819–1885

AS we were on our way to visit Franz Abt, strolling leisurely, for we had given ourselves ample time, we met two of our old friends. They were not together. First there came Professor Seligman and then Harry Belden. Such types, so different to each other—so distinctive, that we compared them as we walked along further. We found in Professor Seligman a tall, thin, academic person, a marvelous combination of intellect, experience, and treasured education. He did not say, "It is a pleasant day"; he was more concerned with the effect on the crops. "This is excellent weather for our farmers. I was fearful about last week's frost." He did not think of the simple facts of his daily existence; he was analyzing the larger matters of world importance. Marriages were essential to the state, a safeguard of maternity and paternity. He was an observer of life in its big aspects. Religion was a tremendous force, war was

the cause of universal differences; but beings were simply integral parts of the scheme of things, the same as minerals or the ocean. Human beings were only the present day development of the cosmic. One can imagine the professor as he walked, slowly, sedately at our side, leaving us at the College gates.

On the other hand, our second friend, Harry Belden, was quite a simpleton, so to speak. He knew nothing of politics, religion, sociology, astronomy, or what not. Or if he did, he never showed the learning. One never heard him talk of complex matters. It was all of the day, the nearby observations. "That little baby is smiling," he said with delight as we passed. Then his eyes growing wider, he added, "What a sad face the mother has! I wonder what is on her mind. I hope it's nothing too severe. Ah, ah, boys, what a glorious day! I heard a boy singing and whistling just now; how sprightly he walked!"

This man Belden would have been a terrible bore to the first friend—it's good they don't know each other, though I'm sure the simple chap could learn from the other and would love to listen, unless he's quite incorrigible.

What opposing personalities! The one all learning, erudite, the other all simplicity, obvious; both genuine, both good men and true, but different, that's all.

My companion remarked when Belden left us,

"Quite a baby, isn't he? So utterly serious and so enthusiastic over commonplaces!"

"You sneer at Belden, James, but I can't. I think he's perfectly right to do as he feels. And I'm not so sure but that he fulfills a duty, that he justifies his living."

"Pooh, Charles," scoffingly retorted James. "You don't imagine Belden can be put in the same breath as—as Professor Seligman. Talk of justifying living. What has Belden done? But look at Seligman—look at his inventions. Think of his geometric theory which is revolutionary."

"I am not discounting the merit of Professor Seligman," I answered. "But it's different. Belden makes you glad to be with him—at least in certain moods." James pretended to frown. We have our arguments. But we are friends always.

"You're incorrigible, Charles. . . . But it's that same incorrigibility that's dragging you all over the map, that's wasting our time now visiting this Abt."

My companion was not a little amused at me for wanting to meet what he insisted was so ordinary a man as Abt. James is strange. He adores Professor Seligman, but he can't excuse Belden. To justify himself about Abt, James continued his argument: "Why, he hasn't a single orchestral number to his credit; he has never attempted an opera, and everybody knows that the few piano compositions of his earlier days have long since been discarded. They were always considered purely of a parlor

character—anyway, nothing big or vital about them. Now what has he done? Stuff that everybody is singing? Songs that can't live, songs only of the moment, songs of the barest importance, songs of simple everyday ideas. Just read the titles: "When the Swallows Homeward Fly"—now, what is there in that song to distinguish the composer? "Good Night My Heart's Child!" Compare that song to the tiniest of piano compositions, of, let us say, Chopin; see how flat it is. Even do this, compare it to a song of Brahms or Hugo Wolf, or any other real composer—there's nothing of merit in it. You almost know what's coming from one note to the other. I don't call that music!"

So my friend argued, insisting that the meeting with Abt could be but commonplace, disclosing facts of no historical import. I was not to be so easily bested. I argued:

"But don't you think that perhaps the very nature of Abt's songs are worthy of attention for their simplicity? Isn't there something in common between him and our friend Belden of the naïve personality? Because a man views life through his eyes and sees only what is happening, instead of viewing life through colored glasses, X-ray glasses, scientific eyes, and seeing beneath the surface, is he useless? We're to meet Abt for the sake of music."

"Ha, ha, that's good," laughed my friend in derision, "do you call such things music? Can you

call by the same name the masterpieces of Beethoven and the songs of this man? Both music? You use the word, music?"

"No, I don't class them together," said I. "They're different men and different musicians. One is universal in bigness, one is universal in smallness. One is a builder of mountains, one of miniatures. One appeals to the greatness in men, one to the littleness. But both make music, if both develop that which pleases, enriches and betters the world. Oh, James, often I wish—if only Beethoven could get into the hearts of as many listeners as Abt has reached . . . and as far down into the hearts, as always he does. But Beethoven has been limited, while Abt has reached the millions."

"Wait a minute."

James stopped short, hands on hips.

"Is it the selling in the millions that excites you? Because if it is, then I can point to the vulgar so-called popular songs of the United States and France and England, songs that are not only unmusical but degrading. The fact that the songs of Abt sell in millions is probably proof that they are no good." With that, James nodded as if to indicate I'd never be able to answer.

But I said: "I think you're very unfair to compare Abt with the cheap song writers. . . . You look surprised. Abt's songs are musical. They are sincere. They are not just scribbled out to make a tune. . . . I'm going to tell you something. I con-

sider music good if it is sincere, if it conveys a real emotion. Therefore Abt's is as truly good music as that of any other you can name. But the so-called popular song writers can't be classed in good music. The something is missing."

"Ah, but let's discontinue our discussion until some other time."

There we were at the home of Franz Abt. Standing at the door if you please, waiting for us, was the composer himself. It was a calm, balmy day, the sun shone beautifully, and the flowers were in blossom. Against the background of the flowery garden stood Abt, in a silk shirt and trousers, his head uncovered. He had a soft collar and bow tie, and his hands were hospitably outstretched to greet us. An interesting figure he was, with a large head, massive high forehead, hair bushy and plentiful and falling gracefully over the sides. The face was somewhat of a puzzle; soulful, kindly, dreamer's eyes, a long straight nose, straight, tight lips, and a chin of determination. As if there were two faces —from the nose upward, a man of dreams; from the nose downward, a man of business.

After a few words, Abt drew us indoors. "I've a lovely dinner for you. I knew you'd be hungry when you arrived. I only hope it isn't cold. So you come right in and sit down. I don't know whether you'll like this sort of meal; it's what I prefer, good simple, substantial food. Come in, I'm glad to see you."

This was a queer beginning but a very likable one. Abt acted as if we were old friends, regular callers—without any frills or formalities. Therefore we fell naturally into his spirit.

We went in, we sat down, we ate with an appetite. And we talked of everything on the table, the greens, picked right on the nearby ground; the berries, Abt's own privately cultivated brand; the deliciousness of the water, just as it came from the spring. Abt was generous in supplying us with facts about all these things and the information was interesting. Who even knew berries could be of such variety and so susceptible to culture? We talked of everything on the table, in the house, of the neighbors, the town—and completely forgot that we had come to discuss music.

It dawned on us with a crash when we adjourned after dinner to the study-room, a queer combination of curio cloister, library and music room, with a piano, odd bric-a-brac and pictures.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Abt," said I, "but it seems we've neglected our mission here—we haven't asked you a thing about yourself and your music. Instead, we've been going at a great pace about your dinner. You're such an excellent host that——"

Abt laughed and kept on laughing for several minutes.

"What's the use of our worrying about that? Let's not talk about music. It seems to lose so much under analysis! Let's do what we're doing

right now—Let's live music. You—you look surprised. This is music—our talk, our contact together. . . . Whenever people get didactic and analytical I say, 'Oh, let's not talk about any subject. Let's live it. The trouble with people nowadays is that they *do* less than they talk. Don't talk about love, let's love. Let's not talk about religion, let's live right.' Will you permit me, my young friends, to tell you something of my philosophy, if it can be dignified with that name. . . . It is just this: Be as you would preach. Don't preach and be something else. Be your own living sermon.

"Now, strange as it may seem to you, I started out in life to be a minister, like my father before me. But that course of life never satisfied me. My good father wanted me to study theology; he felt that the calling of the church was the noblest of all. I know the nobility of the church. But I saw a different way of preaching little homely sermons. Through music! Outside of that aspect, however, I wanted music to be my life. Father and I deeply loved each other. So to please father I studied for the ministry, and to please me, father permitted me to take up my music as well.

"When my dear father passed out, I felt I was at liberty. I felt I no longer needed to adhere to the traditional ideas of the ministry, and I gave up the pulpit forever. At once I had joined the orchestra at the Hof-Theater, later serving on the executive staff as well. I've combined business with the art,

I learned to play one instrument after another, and was finally, to my undying joy, elected conductor and chapelmaster.

"See how my mind worked, young friends. I had great ambitions in music—I wanted to unite the greatest operas and orchestral masterpieces. I denied myself every pleasure in the serious ambition to write something tremendous. My contributions I demanded must be such that they would stand with the master composers.

"I wanted to write oratorios that would be deeply religious—for my early training for the ministry in me yearned to preach. I had in mind the writing of sacred operas and grand operas with a message. . . . Instead, what have I done? Little songs, little bits of simplest melodies. Perhaps you might say I couldn't do the other big works—so I was forced to take the lesser form. Right! Forced by inclination and the sweetest muse that ever prompted man. My songs just stay a moment and are gone. Why, everybody can understand them. They are as transparent as a looking glass and as sheer as a piece of silk. There is no mechanism to them—they are all melody.

"Where are my ambitions? you might ask me. Turned to a different direction, that's all—but still great—turned in the direction of the people's hearts. I want to reach the crowd—the people in factories, stores, on the streets. I found it is easiest to reach hearts with little melody songs than with anything

else. My ambition now is to fashion my music of the simplest ideas, built around everyday, human emotions and send them out with my blessings. Songs to uplift without preaching. Sermons without theology, lyric outbursts for the little old mothers and fathers and sweethearts. Oh, I've long passed the stage where I worry about the hereafter of my fame. The good I can do is here, now, on the wing. I get my reward when I walk down the street of an evening, and hear from out the homes the sound of my songs.

"Let me tell you a little story:

"Once, when I was strolling of a warm summer night through the park, I heard a voice—a lad was sitting on a bench with his girl. He was singing one of my little love songs to her; she was nodding her head and silently assenting to his proposal made in that little melody. Then and there I halted and the blood gushed madly through my veins and I said to myself, 'Franz, my boy, this is success. This is reaching deep into hearts.' If I were conducting my score at the opera house, bowing to well-dressed-up society, perfunctorily clapping their hands, that wouldn't be half as real as this.

"Another story. A lady came to me one day with a little boy. 'Mr. Abt,' she said, 'my mother used to hear your father preach, and it did her a world of good. But my boy and I hear you preach in your songs.' To this I blushed and said, 'Madame, help yourself to some fruit. Little boy, have an apple!'

"Ah, but boys, why are we discussing my music? Let's sit out there on the lawn, and get a tonic of the perfumed air."

For two hours we listened to the homely simplicity of the preacher-singer and reveled in the joy of living the simple life. . . . As my companion and I went back from the home of Abt, we weren't arguing any more—we were just as happy as children. We had forgotten academics and were singing "When the Swallows Homeward Fly," as a concert artist might have performed the best of Schubert.

Important works of Abt are: "When the Swallows Homeward Fly," "Good Night, My Heart's Child," "Red Riding Hood," "Little Snowdrop," "Cinderella," and hundreds of choruses and cantatas.

XII

FACE TO FACE WITH RUBINSTEIN

1830–1894

THE way to Peterhof from St. Petersburg is through lovely wooded country. You ride under the shade of grandfather trees, which seem to carry the history of all Russia. Occasionally one catches a glimpse of the sea, sparkling in the sun and playfully making sport with the beach. The villa of Anton Rubinstein at Peterhof is on a little hill, which faces the sea and stands sentinel at the edge of a baby forest. It is a gray-green house, spacious and beautiful. At the left of the entrance is a fruit garden, though Anton Rubinstein himself said that only ladies or milksop men like raw fruit.

We enter the porch and walk through the long hallway, to the turret staircase at the rear. Round and round these steps, as you might climb the height of a ship from deck to deck, we ascend into the tower.

It might be called a conning tower, for through the large window, we can look again toward the

water, and again see the glistening leaves and the swaying branches of the forest. A rapid glance of the circular room discloses a piano, a bust of Mephistopheles (is it significant?), a writing table, a divan—and a man.

His clothes show signs of wear and lack of care. A very narrow tie, scarcely a shoe-string in width, is about his low collar. Russian to the backbone, there's no doubt of that, in the way he looks, swarthy complexion, high cheekbones, little fleshy nose, high forehead, surmounted by a mountain of thick, bushy dark brown hair. Such hair! It is combed high and grows densely, framing the face and touching the shoulders. Woman would glory in it. Wigmakers would pay fabulous prices for it. It is Samsonian. It is almost barbaric.

The face is large, the head is large for the body. The forehead is massive. Ugly absolutely? Beautiful, beyond a doubt. Something about the physiognomy is reminiscent of Beethoven—there is that Gibraltar-like strength to the mass-composition. But the comparison is no sooner made than it is withdrawn, for the faces are utterly unlike.

Strange eyes of Rubinstein. The upper lids are half closed, drawn at the outer corners, and sheathing the eyes. Only a narrow strip of the white peers through, giving an eternal look, searching, scrutinizing, closely analyzing, deeply thinking, brooding, plotting, suspecting, weighing—soaring, dreaming. The eyelids scarcely ever open wide, except when

fire and fury consume the man. A Russian indeed, with American Indian eyes! Blue, we thought, but then at times they seemed gray or black or brown.

He greets us smilingly; taking our proffered hand in his two huge paws, which touch with the softness of velvet, yielding, gentle, feminine-like, we feel as if our hands were drowning in his. Very broad hands, not so long, fingers thick at the base and tapering rapidly to the tips. Those are the hands of Rubinstein, which even during his boyhood were declared to be "as light as feathers and strong as iron."

"This is the workshop of Anton Rubinstein," the strong mouth phrases in excellent English, heavy with the thickest Russian accent, and strange additions of *Y* sounds on words. "There you see my inspiration," he laughingly says as he points to his bust of Mephistopheles. "Over there in the woods and the sea, you behold my treasure-house of material—my books of research, my library of information—those smiling waves and nodding trees. Here you see me, Anton Rubinstein, very little nose and much hair, so?

"The Jews will tell you I am a Christian, the Christians retort I am a Jew. So? Russians declare my music is German and Germans say it is typically Russian. So? Some pianists say, 'Well, he can compose'; and composers say, 'He can play piano.' So? Those who are very radical are sure

I am conservative, and those who lean backwards say I am too forward. So?

"Of course, my parents were Jewish. We lived in a little town in Messarabia, Russia, and in our family were sixty members, from the grandfather, Roman Rubinstein, to the littlest cousin. My father was a Pole, my mother was German. But I am a Russian. I am a Russian because this is my dear country, and despite all that my people were made to suffer, I am for Russia and hoping for Russian art. I was a tiny boy, when grandfather, Roman, called all of the family together in his little house. The doors were locked, and the good old man, I can remember how he looked to my childish eyes—in his Jewish gabardine and in his rabbinical cap and shawl, with his long thick beard—he said, 'My family, you must take a terrible step. You are the descendants of centuries of Jews. But the Czar has issued a most unjust edict. A law now made, will exterminate us all. For myself I do not care, I have lived and suffered. But for you all I want to tell you what to do. Take the advice of the head of your family. A live Christian is better than a dead Jew. A little holy water is an ordeal and the baptism is an ordeal. But better that than death.'

"So we lived and kept our wealth. My father, my father's family all of them, had no music. But my mother. I watched her play at the piano and I loved it. At five years old I took lessons and I

could play to please everybody at six. Many the rap on my knuckles I received. I took lessons from one other, a pupil of Field, for three years. That is all. I have been my own teacher. I have devoted my life to the study of piano. It alone is the musical entirety.

"I was born with phenomenal fingers and I have cultivated strength and lightness. That is the secret —that with hours and hours of heart-rending study. For days I have played over phrases trying to get the singing of a tenor voice in the keys, and I did— I made them sing. For it is only with labor, tears, bitter as death, that the artist reaches perfection.

"Pupils come to me. I love to teach, I who to audiences am mad and impatient. I can sit for hours and teach—so long as there is a spark of something to fan into life. I say to pupils of the piano, 'It is not so much how to play. How does it sound? Listen, listen to yourself.' I never lose my temper with them, although in here is lurking a fiery ire for all who deserve it. Once a pupil I was correcting said, 'Master, you play it the way I did.' Well, there you are. 'Ah, take counsel from my mistakes —I am whimsical and incorrect. *You* play right, don't follow me. And don't play Beethoven, Bach and Chopin as somebody else has arranged their music—I want them as they are—they're good enough for me.'

"In practicing piano you move the fingers, but in playing it you move hearts. Too true is it that most

pianists do only the former! In England they said I used to play more wrong notes than right ones. Because I changed my interpretations. Why I play as I feel—a piece of music is not fixed in its character.

"And speaking of teaching, I wonder if the people will remember what I have tried to create for my country. I have tried to make good performers, good listeners, too. My Conservatory, with its classes—its branches and thousands of listener members. I have left many prizes for composition and playing. We have an orchestra, and how I have suffered with that too. Sometimes I would forget myself. A certain member was joking during rehearsal. I was angry and didn't realize what I was doing. I knocked the violin out of his hand and the poor fellow went crying from the room. Those people are not so serious as I want—as I was myself.

"When I was only ten, I started out on my career —an infant prodigy. Bad business—infant prodigies. But I recovered. I had a narrow escape after being afflicted with infant prodigitis. The great Liszt heard me. He clasped me in his arms—it was the way Beethoven had done with him, and it was kind for him to be so nice. Then I made money. The family didn't like that—they were most un-Jewish in their financial affairs. They didn't want me to go out and make money. They didn't want people telling me how well I could play. 'Leave the boy alone and let him grow up'—but I didn't

go that way. I went into the world, and I have never left it. I have loved it, this art of mine, and I have never, so our Russian saying has it, regarded my art as merely the cow that supplies the milk. I refused a big offer to go back to your America. I cannot stand the journey. I hate oceans—they are all right to look at—that's all. I went there once for a year at $40,000. The Americans are charming people, highly artistic and full of energy, but they insist on calling the concerts a 'show,' as if I were a menagerie or a circus. I will tell you a little story of an American, what you call a Yankee, who patronized me after a concert, patted me on the shoulder and said I played well, but 'why don't you play something for the soul.' So I told him I did, for my soul, not his!

"I have plenty of soul, all right. I have much love, so much so that I once determined to compose a work and call it 'Love Variations.' I had to abandon the idea; for when I was young I had my theme but could devise no variations; now I am old, variations come a-plenty, but, alas, my theme fails me. That reminds me of Liszt. Liszt and I had more competitions than one. I fought him in piano supremacy and feminine supremacy. I will tell you something. Liszt is greatest. He is field marshal —we are only soldiers. But, hush, I will tell you on the other matter—women. They have been always most attractive to me. God created woman, she remains the most beautiful of His creations, but

full of faults. He didn't remove them, being convinced they would enhance her charms. Oh, many arguments with Liszt did I have about women. He said they could be artists. I say, no. She is lovely but not to be composer or player. Let her be sweetheart, wife, mother.

"Speaking of Liszt brings back recollections. One day out in Rotterdam, in Holland, Liszt and I were riding. We jumped out at a little shop presumably to buy some souvenirs, but really so that Liszt could see the interesting pretty lady in the shop. He was dressed in style, nice gloves and stick, and I was quite ordinary. She smiled at us and took our money, and when we went out—our carriage was gone. It was down near the dykes, and soon we were surrounded by a crowd of people who laughed at our appearance, particularly that of the fashionable Liszt's.

"They formed a circle about us and taunted us. Soon, I broke through, knocking down a few, and ran away fast, with Liszt following after. He followed me much afterward. Ha, ha, ha.

"One time in England I was invited to call at the Palace, to see Queen Victoria and her royal consort, Prince Albert. I came in, they bowed, said nothing—and waited. It was a terrible moment—all the aunts and uncles and cousins and friends of the family were there, and all they did was eye me up, not a word. I was in a predicament. Until I spied a piano—I rushed for it, and played. Later

I discovered that the reason for it was that I was suspected of being no pianist at all, but a Russian spy. See, do you?

"I have been suspected many times of being a spy. One time on the Russian border, my trunk full of my precious manuscripts was seized. It looked to them like seditious matter being brought in under the guise of music. (Many critics have before and since accused the music of mine of similar characteristics.) Then I could do nothing. I went to Petersburg a day or two later. I brought my credentials. But what do you think? The trunk had been sold, as junk, to some dealer in groceries, or furniture, or meat. I never recovered it. That's a predicament for any composer.

"I have been in a predicament as a composer always. 'You're a pianist, stay that way.' So says the world. But I won't. I will write. Well, I have written a little—twenty operas, five symphonies, twenty-one chamber music pieces, eleven sonatas, and many piano pieces, three hundred about, with vocal solos. Some of my operas are oratorios put into dramatic form. I cannot dream of a noble oratorio like "The Messiah" being sung by artists in fashionable attire. Is it not ridiculous? And at the same time you must admit there is nothing sacrilegious about sacred operas, is there?

"But I give you a prediction, my friend, you think of Rubinstein as a pianist—you will concede that he is first or second in the world, so? I will give

you this prediction. I am the successor of Schubert and Chopin. One hundred years, out will come Rubinstein's sacred opera and other operas, symphonies, sonatas, overtures, fugues, and then a great Rubinstein, a composer, will rise before you.[1] The present is always suspicious, always over-critical, over-jealous. The future looks back on the past and has no prejudices. The future does not think of a Jew or a Christian, or a conservative or a radical, a pianist or a composer. It says, 'That is marvelous music or not'; and that is all. It seems my life is a failure. Why? I wouldn't go out and say I was a God. Mohammed had to tell the people he was a prophet, Wagner that he was the savior of art. But I couldn't do it. I would not. What a farce. But I predict. Remember. With me is concluded the third epoch of art! Of course now it's a bad time for music. We are at a standstill. Music is wearisome and I'll not make men like that."

As he talks in this wise, Rubinstein grows excited, and runs his hand through his hair, shaking back the great mane, furiously. This seems to be an outlet for his vigor and rage. He runs his hand

[1]This prediction does not seem destined to be carried out. Scarcely any of his music is played. He seems to have failed as a composer. Rubinstein was original—full of melody, but too prolific and too careless. He was a lesser Mendelssohn and a poor substitute for Chopin. He was a better originator than Liszt, but he did not have Liszt's understanding and orchestral powers as a composer.

into the thick locks and musses them up, then smoothes them into place again.

"Aha, I excite myself. When that happens, do you know what I do? I must play and get rid of the passion. That is the only way for me. Yes, truly—truly, that is my love. That is what I must do, play my piano, no matter how I might be placed, as a pauper or a rich man. I think I know. I think I could get along without anything, even women. But my piano, I must have. I will play for you. No more do I play for money—only for myself and charity."

He sits far back from the instrument on the edge of the chair, and leans over to the keyboard. He caresses the keys, carelessly. Tender little tunes of his own. Then comes the tantrum. A wild strange excitement takes possession of him. All the powers of earth seem to speak through him, as he smashes and piles chord upon chord. I have seen other great soloists, playing at the piano. But with Rubinstein, the piano is a mere toy. It is his obedient servant, which he, Rubinstein, makes speak like a giant orchestra. Even in the loudest chords, his tone is never harsh. The madness of the man, speaks through the instrument. All the defects of his perverse disposition as well as his great virtues, his marvelous technique are speaking. His autocratic spirit, his lavish spendthrift habits, his laughing, biting sarcasm, unbridled passionate instincts are speaking. His Jewish ancestry and its suffering are

speaking. His wayward, unmanageable physical side is speaking. Technique is forgotten. These are messages. Never before could an artist so truly depict a scene or a mood. His playing is dramatic. Characters speak and cry and run madly. You can hear winds calling, forests murmuring, lovers crooning; agony at times, joy-bells at other moments. Melancholy, tender, playful, all emotions he brings into his playing.

The eyes close tighter, then open wide and spit fire. They are black now with passion, now green with anger, now blue with happiness, now gray with sadness, always changing.

It is Rubinstein, the invincible pianist, the lion, who is speaking.

Rubinstein's best orchestral works are his symphonies: "The Ocean," and "The Dramatic," and the "Fifth," his outline to Antony and Cleopatra, the "Triumphal Overture," "Nero," "Paradise Lost," "The Demon," "Ivan the Terrible." Everybody at some time or other has played "Kamennoi-Ostrow." Other important works are: "The "Tower of Babel," "Paradise Lost," "Moses," "The Demon," "Don Quixote."

Books about the composer: Biography by MacArthur; and "Memoirs," by Rubinstein himself.

XIII

FACE TO FACE WITH CRISTOFORI[1]

1653–1731

LEOPOLD GODOWSKY, who, according to Huneker, is the pianists' pianist, was discussing pianos and players of pianos with me the other day. De Pachmann has the most delightful way of performing—he plays everything all wrong; he disregards every rule of technique, phrasing, and style, but he has the true piano touch, and hence he is enchanting. Freidheim brings out the orchestral effects; with him everything seems to be transcribed from a large score, he is not content with his medium, he has not the true piano touch, but nevertheless, he is enchanting. Joseffy is exquisite. Hofmann is perfection; Lhevinne is the present-day Rubinstein.

The true piano touch is something utterly distinct from all other things. It is the method of the artist

[1] This is the romance of the piano. Instrument makers, too, deserve to be known. Stradivarius is immortal in his violins. Why not Cristofori in his pianos?

for whom the keyboard is a specific entity, an instrument complete in itself.

Take the piano, as Godowsky says, and you will find there a world of music. Nothing else is needed. Rubinstein remarked that it is the only complete instrument. No other musical device is like it; yet all other instruments seem to need the piano for accompaniment. You can express any emotion on the piano; the tone will sing and prolong itself for any length of time; you can bring out the faintest whisper, *piano*, *pianissimo*, meaning softly; you may bring out the thunderous crashing chords, *forte*, *fortissimo*, meaning loudly. That is the meaning of the name, the *pianoforte*, the instrument which can depict softness and power in sound.

It seems a very natural thing to us that we should be able to play softly and loudly, doesn't it? But it didn't to Cristofori, or to all those who came before him. Its predecessor, the harpsichord, was not so responsive and all-inclusive in its effects.

When we examine the great, majestic, concert grand piano, like a queen in its full, graceful lines, royal and dominating on any stage or in any drawing-room, we hardly wonder how it happened to grow that way. We just take it for granted—it always must have been. When we think of how empty homes would be without their pianos, how many lives would grow duller without their music and its solace, we might be willing, if it were suggested, to pay a passing compliment to the inventor

of the instrument. Did it have an inventor? We never thought of that before, but considered that like Topsy, it must have just "growed." Yet of course it must have had an inventor. Who was he?

There are claimants galore to the distinction. Quite a controversy has been carried on, just as there has been over Bacon's Shakespeare, or Shakespeare's Bacon. Marius and Schroter and Silberman and Cristofori. But as Shakespeare continues to retain his title to his plays, so Cristofori seems to have won out by superior proofs.

Now, you see this old pianoforte in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is a strangely slender sister to the present-day concert grand, but it's a Cristofori. How it came over here was like this: Mrs. John Crosby Brown brought it; she had bought it of a family who had previously bought it of Signora Moconni Martolli of Florence. This Signora remembered distinctly that her father had it of an old furniture shopkeeper in exchange for some wine. Nobody paid much attention to it until, looking under the board, a friend noticed this inscription: "Bartholomeu di Christophorus Patavinius, Inventor, faciebat, Florentia, MDCCXX."

Of course, if this were genuine, and it seemed to be, it would tend to make Cristofori's claims to the invention an absolute fact since the date would give him priority over all others.

Now, if the truth were told, it would be a very

romantic story. In fact, if we were to draw the curtains aside and look into the world of 1720——

Ding! Dong! Ding! Dong! ring the deep-sounding bells of the Paduan Cathedral; men and women are flocking to a church, built of black and white marble in the Romanesque style. It is noon in the market-place, houses on either side of the street are made dazzling by the bright-colored awnings at the windows and the stone arcades along the front. The fountain is playing musically, a Triton is blowing the water through his bronze spiral trumpet shell.

Down the street comes the equipage of royalty. The Grand Duke Cosmo the Third of Florence is returning to his city, and taking with him the Paduan harpsichord-maker, Cristofori. The artisan is dressed in his best—he wears a violet cloak with a silver design embroidered on the shoulder. He is very happy and yet he is loathe to bid good-by to his birthplace.

"God keep our good Cristofori," the burghers shout as the carriage goes by. "May he continue long to make good music for the people's merriness."

And as the carriage disappeared, "There goes the best harpsichord-maker in Padua. We ought to have tried to keep him. Who'll replace him? Yes, who?"

"Best in Padua? What say you? Aye, in all Italy, if not the world. The Grand Duke of Florence knew what he was about when he picked Cristofori. Say, brother, I will warrant when you get a

Cristofori harpsichord you get something of the best. A guarantee goes with it. The Duke had to pay a pretty price for Cristofori, eh?"

"And a fool Cristofori would be to give up his business here, which is flourishing, with three helpers busy, to go live in a palace, working only for the Duke, if he were *not* paid a price. How can he earn anything now that he is tied down?"

While all this discussion was in progress, the carriage had reached Florence, had past Sante Croce's sacred portals, the Santa Maria Novella, the bridge that old Taddio Gaddi built, Giotto's tower, and the statues of the Medicis.

Then the Duke showed his new retainer to his rooms. "This will be your private shop, my dear Cristofori. And I am very anxious to watch the development of that idea of yours. It sounds very interesting to me. Keep quiet about it. Let no publicity be given it. Let me help you with it if I can."

Bartolomeu inspected his new quarters. Yes, they were sufficiently large for his purpose. The view was beautiful, looking over San Lorenzo, and what further need to worry? No more selling instruments, no more tradespeople to annoy him, just to satisfy the Duke, that's all. And time in which to work out the great idea.

The olive skin wrinkled into a smile at the thought of it. Time now to work it out! Wonderful!

Cristofori rubbed his hands in unfeigned delight. Soon he was eagerly at work on the marvelous invention which he felt was to revolutionize the musical world. So quickly did he develop the invention, that less than a month after his arrival he had asked the Grand Duke to "pay me the honor to be the first to hear and see my humble idea in practice."

Behold the two in the laboratory.

"Now, your Grace, this is what I have done. You see I play the harpsichord. So, what do you hear? The picking of the strings. As I touch the key, the string is plucked. I want to do something quiet; I pluck. I want to do something loud; I pluck. It is the same. I want to play a short note; I pluck it. I want to play a long note; I pluck. There isn't any difference. Is that music? Now, see this violin. I play a long or short note by drawing the bow across the strings. I draw heavy, it is loud; I draw softly, it is quiet. But on the harpsichord I can play many notes at once like this—harmonies, harmonies, beautiful. Oh, I think for years, if only you could make the harpsichord to play soft and loud, piano and forte."

"Yes, yes, Cristofori," impatiently urged the Duke, "but what of your invention?" The olive skin crinkled like a piece of leather into a mysterious smile. It is good to make a Duke curious and eager, the realization will be so much the more enchanting and valuable when curiosity is satisfied.

"I say *I* am thinking, but I am not the only one who thinks about this. Yet, the one who is responsible for solving this idea, he will be very important. They will make his name always famous like Amati, but more so than that. I believe, your Grace, that history will be able to say that your Court was the birthplace of the new invention, and you, your Grace, its patron and I, your humble servant, its creator."

"Yes, but show it to me, Cristofori, without delay," the Duke ordered impetuously.

"I delay no more. Now listen, your Grace, I strike this note very soft and piano, very quickly and delicately, so—la! Is that not very soft?" and Cristofori looked at the Duke with a triumphant air. "But wait. Now I strike the note very loud and long, so—b-o-o-m! What do you think?" and the artisan stands with his fists on his hips, his head perked on an angle.

"Do it again," orders the Duke, bending over the keyboard and looking into the instrument. "Why, Cristofori, what does this mean? You don't pluck the strings at all. You hit them. You strike at them. Instead of quills to pluck, you have a lot of hammers!"

"Hammers!" At that Cristofori is angry. He resents the word. His feelings are hurt. "Hammers, your Grace, how can you say that!" And yet, on reflection, it seems right, and he rather likes it. "Yes, hammers, your Grace. I guess that's

right. And the harder you hit the hammers, the bigger the tone. Just try it; you can control the volume of tone yourself."

The Duke tries it and smiles, smacks his lips as if he had eaten of a rare delicacy, and does it again.

"Congratulations, my Cristofori, you have accomplished the long-sought wonder. But wait, there's something you haven't thought of." And the Duke seems to withdraw his approval. "What's there to prevent—that's so—what's there to prevent the hammer from staying down, so that when you want to repeat the note, you've nothing to hit."

"Easy; see this spring, that brings the hammer back in place. Look, I can repeat all I like, la-la-la-la, fast and slow, loud and soft."

"Well, there's no doubt about it, Cristofori, you've done it. It's right, it's right. And we must let the world know about it, for your fame and mine. Your stipend shall be increased, because of this, materially increased. I'll send forth the heralds."

"No, your Grace, your pardon. Wait a while yet, until we are sure. There may be things we want to change. There may be many reasons. Let us not announce it yet. Besides, I've not shown you the most important point. See this foot-lever; this releases the dampers."

"The dampers, Cristofori, what are those?"

"Look here, now, did you not think that when the hammers hit the strings—yes, hammers *is* a good word—when they hit the strings, I say, did you not

think that the tone might go on a long time? See this cloth over the strings? When you touch the key, the damper lifts from the string and lets it vibrate. So long as you hold down the key, the string is free of the damper. Release the key, and the damper drops back and stops the tone. Now, this foot-lever lifts the dampers a long way, so as to permit even a louder tone. There's the idea, loud and soft, loud as you like, soft as you like; there are many other points about my invention, but you see what this new *piano* and *forte* instrument can do. Compare it with the harpsichord."

The Duke is amazed. He looks over the new invention from every angle. He touches the keys and listens like an amused child with a new toy. Every once in a while he glances up at Cristofori and nods his head in approval. Cristofori looks back at him and the olive skin wrinkles each time into a smile.

"I have it!" the Duke exclaims of a sudden, as if making a terrific discovery himself. "Now, the best proof of what good this piano and forte can be, is to hear some music on it. We will arrange a concert. We will send for the players of the harpsichord. Suppose we were to send for the best of them, and make him a special inducement to stay in Florence as a piano-and-forte player exclusively. We could call him the piano-and-forte musician, the piano-and-forte player. Pianoforte player, hm! A good name; I am good at names. I gave the hammer name to those little things. What do you think

of the pianoforte as a name for your new instrument?"

Cristofori nods and says very little, but wrinkles the olive skin into many smiles. He is too happy for speech.

"Now, who would be a good man to engage as a player? We will pay him any price. . . . What? Yes, yes, he could do—he's a good man, but what do you think of . . .?"

. . . . . .

Now, as I was saying, this John Crosby Brown instrument with the Cristofori inscription makes it quite positive that he was the real inventor of the pianoforte. Godowsky says that the supremacy of the piano over all other instruments is in its absolute independence; its ability to bring into being any effect at all.

"This is the way the old harpsichord would sound," said Godowsky, and he played something very staccato and placid, and with a sameness very quaint.

"This is the way the pianoforte colors the music," he continued; and he played a movement from the Beethoven "Sonata Pathetique," with its tender, tragic depth of song, some notes lingering so long —so long.

XIV

FACE TO FACE WITH FOSTER[1]

1826–1864

"COME down to de meetin'. Ain't you comin' down? Ev'y good darky's gwine come along and get converted to de Lord."

A southern camp meeting. There's nothing like it in the world. All the colored folks are there, old ones, young ones, men, and girls. Parson George Washington Smith is the preacher. He's a short, shriveled-up old gentleman, with white hair on a coal black head.

[1] Little Marion (Marion Foster), mentioned in the latter part of this story, is still living. She read this chapter when it appeared in the *New York Globe* and spoke to the author in the following words: "So much untruth has been written about my father, so much that is utterly a mass of falsehood, that it is good to come upon your interesting and fine presentation. How did you get it? How did you sense the unknown secrets of my father's heart? What you have given is true, especially the boyhood and the last days." Marion is now Mrs. Welch, an old lady, whom the world has permitted to live almost in poverty, while publishers waxed wealthy with the Foster songs. As a result of the talk, the author of this book became interested in "Little Marion" and a movement to bring her a Congressional grant was discussed.

"Confide in the Lord, oh my bredren," he pleads. "Give up your earthly sins and come to God. Who's gwine to come to God?"

"I'm agwine to, parson," says a tall, burly fellow. "I've been a bad man. I done tol' lies to de master. I done stole chicken of the neighbors, but I want forgiveness and the right to be a good being, parson. I want to come to God."

"Brudder Zachariah, you're comin' along. Welcome in the Lord's flock of sheep. The Good Shepherd will cleanse you of your sins. Who else will come with the Lord?"

"I'se acomin'," and "I'se acomin'" sound from all parts of the little hall. This old fellow tells of how "I first was converted to the Lord, and since that time, twenty years ago, I ain't never spoke a cross word to nobody, not even my wife, and I ain't even swear when the master gave me a horsewhipping for nothing."

"Oh, hallelujah, amen! Praise be the Lord," is heard from dozens of throats, mixed with the strange hysterical laugh of the negro.

"Let us sing, bredren and sisters," urges the parson.

The colored congregation lifts its voice in solemn hymns of strange, spiritual nature, moaning and crooning as if they still were singing out in Africa with the hot sun beating down upon them and the chief smiling at them, and the drums tum-tumming and the flutes playing. Forgotten the lash,

forgotten the slavery, forgotten everything but singing.

As you look over that colored gathering, you see one white face. It is handsome and the face of a patrician of southern aristocracy; a long aquiline nose, black, straight hair, brushed at the side; large, beaming, sorrowful black eyes. You sense what rapt attention this lone outsider pays to all the services.

He is drinking in the whole scene, he is listening to the strange singing and he is developing that idea which has been in the back of his brain so long. He could tell the white folks through music of the colored brethren—of their better traits, of their loving hearts. Through music he would help free the slaves, and lift them up. A fine young man! He is just above medium height, this young man, dressed in the loose clothes of the day, with soft broad collar and bow tie, large cuffs and long coat.

When he went back to his little room that night he was humming a tune to himself, and he fell asleep thinking that some day somebody would take that Negro idea and put it to music for the whole world to sing. And why shouldn't it be Stephen Foster?

Next morning he went down to his daily work. It was scarcely the expected duty of a dreamer. He was bookkeeper to his brother, the best known grocer in the town. The merchant was the successful member of the Foster family. Stephen never really amounted to much. All he did was

dream and patter away—no thought of business or money or getting up and doing. He was always thinking about music and such things.

And what use is music?

When other boys were getting a trade learned, Stephen was fooling away at an old flageolet. There was nobody around to teach him. He had to figure it out himself and you must admit it, he did get the little pipe to make pleasant sounds—melodies you recognized from church or the annual ball.

Old Mr. Kleber, down at the Kleber piano store, heard him one day, and figured he had talent. That's when he was around twenty. So Stephen was given a few lessons in the rudiments of reading and writing music, and that's about all. He "sort of" learned the alphabet of music, but didn't even get as far as forming words or sentences.

But that came naturally, anyway. Those negro melodies were pegging away in his mind—he just couldn't forget them. And all the while, nights, and down at the store, he was scribbling melodies, and sometimes studying French and German, so he could read the old operas.

As a matter of fact, right then at his high desk, he was writing down a tune that had been inspired by last night's camp meeting.

Words and music were in his head, "Way Down Upon De Swanee Ribber, Sadly I Roam."

Without hesitation, without pause, the young man scribbled it down to the very end, and was just

about to put the thing away when the brother came out of his office.

"Look here, Stephen, how often have I told you to stop that? Using up my wrapping paper and taking up this valuable time with your scribbling. Good lord, Stephen, if you don't stop it I'll have to do something I don't want to do. Your work is to keep these books. You're behind on them now as it is. What am I going to do to pay you if you are so far behind getting out the customers' statements?"

"Now, you know I do the work," Stephen said with startled manner. "I get it done all right. I'm not particular about staying late. But, when these ideas come to me, I've just got to write them down before they're gone."

"Ideas, fiddlesticks, you stop it or something will happen to you I won't like, and you won't like."

So Stephen turned over the ledger pages as he sat on his high stool and made out statements: "To Miss Jane Aithwite, Dr. 3 pounds of sugar, 6c (my, how low prices were in those days); 2 pounds coffee, 24 cents. . . ."

When night came around Stephen packed up the books and rushed home, for this was the rehearsal time. The Stephen Foster Chorus, consisting of six, including the director and namesake, was to meet in the "studio"—for fun they called it that—of Stephen Foster. Stephen had written out several of his little songs on wrapping paper abstracted from

the Foster grocery store, and the boys were learning them with great vim.

"Well, Stephen, you're a great jackass," said Walter Bennett as he came running in just in time for the first beat of the baton—a bit of sugar cane.

Stephen smiled dimly. He realized that his friend Walter was full of fun, frank and outspoken, and yet a great admirer of his ideas and ideals. But he would smile anyway—there was no fight about this great, quiet, dreaming idealist; this aristocratic looking lad, who loved to stay with the colored folks and the old people at the river; who never hurt a soul in all his life, childlike, naïve, as gentle as a girl.

"A jackass, Walter?"

"Sure! Your staying down there at the grocery store, I mean. You ought to be out and doing things. Fiddling your time as bookkeeper, with your talent. It's all wrong, Stephen. It's rotten, that's what it is."

"I sometimes think that, Walter," said Foster, dreamily, "sometimes I feel I am wasting my best years. But what can I do? These songs I write only for the love of them. I know nothing of music. I'm best where I am. I'm only a country simpleton. I know nothing of the world. Why, they'd all laugh at me. You know I've read about musicians. I've been studying up on it. But they all went to Europe and took years of lessons. And I —I can't do anything. They'd call me a great

ninny. They'd laugh at my songs which you fellows think are so good. But, yet with it all sometimes, Walter, I think that there is an evil voice calling me away, and that it will bring me fame . . . and ruin . . . ruin. Do not talk to me of it," and the face became pained as if it recalled long strange vigils of nights—nights that made him nearly mad—calling him on. "Come out, Stephen Foster, and be famous. Leave the store. You can be as great as any. Come and try." . . . "No, Walter, do not talk of it," Stephen Foster ejaculated. "Let us rehearse." Then for three hours these boys sang together the simple songs of Foster, and talked over their coming concert, and of their first appearance in an amateur theatrical in town.

"You remember, Stephen, how we fixed it. Your music—and words too—you directing it. Why, Stephen, you'll see how you'll be doing professional work some day," Walter insisted.

It was late when the chorus disbanded. Stephen sat at his window and watched the moon, and dreamed until nearly morning.

When Stephen went to his desk next day, his brother was waiting for him. "Late again, Stephen. You were on that music again, I'll bet. These tricks will have to stop."

All through the day the grocer seemed to be trying to pick a quarrel with young Stephen, but the latter went right on with his statements. Perhaps the successful brother was right—perhaps Stephen

had been doing things he shouldn't by taking the paper and the time to scribble—setting his heart on ambitions all out of his sphere.

But what was in the air to-day? Every time he had the chance he put in a grumbling word.

"Let me alone, let me alone. I'm doing my work," Stephen begged.

"Yes, you're doing it now. But this afternoon you'll be scribbling again, and if you do, you'll be through. We might as well have it out now. You must stop this music mania or out you go. I won't have you around."

"Brother," cried Stephen, and his eyes filled with tears. "You don't mean that. You wouldn't deprive me of that little pleasure—the only fun and joy I have in my life."

"I mean that exactly. I don't want my books kept by a fool." With that he walked away, leaving the lad stunned. He could hardly concentrate on his figures from that moment on. If his brother persisted—if he must give up, what then? Would he stop his music or should he go on with it alone—leave the shop and take a chance?

Stephen Foster was not the sort to brave his way. His father had been Mayor—the little town was once called Fosterville. His grandfather had been a great patriot. The land on which the armory stood (now worth millions) had been given to America by that Foster as an aid to Washington. He had the blood of the patriot. He had been born on

July 4th. But what could he do alone? . . . Fate decided.

Toward the end of the day a stranger walked into the store and asked for Mr. Foster. The merchant advanced with a polite air, and asked what he could do for him.

"Why, I have come to speak to you about this work of yours," said the stranger. "I thought we might do business. Your songs are rather good, Mr. Foster. You have a decided gift of melody."

The merchant turned aside with a disgusted air.

"Oh, you mean my brother. Oh, Stephen, come here. Some one to see you." And the grocer walked away.

The younger fellow climbed down from his high chair and came out with a bewildered air.

"Some one for me?" he asked.

"Yes, about that crazy music of yours. Been sending it out, eh?" the brother said, sulkily. "Now that this has happened I suppose you'll think yourself somebody, and there'll be no living with you."

The stranger was very observant and noticed the behavior of the two men. He instantly changed his tactics.

"Yes, this music of yours—I came to speak about it, to say it has some merit—very little, it must be admitted. But it can be worked out if the right talent is put to it. It isn't worth it, but I'll give you $10 apiece for the three. Will you take it?"

Stephen was delighted. Here was a month's pay.

"Yes, yes," he nodded. And the stranger counted out the bills.

Yet Stephen Foster still stayed at the desk, afraid to take the big chance.

There came along one Jane Denny MacDowell, who won his heart, and for a time usurped the place Mother Foster had always held. Jane nodded up and down when Stephen asked the question. If she had nodded sideways it would have been very different. Such is the significance of direction.

The marriage took him away from the books—he was given a better job. A few more songs had been sold. The Stephen Foster Chorus was getting on. And it looked as though fortune was smiling. My, how good it seemed to hold *printed* music and sing from that—music with the name of Stephen Foster on it!

Little Marion nodded also at the world—a beautiful little girl who made Stephen's life very happy. Indeed, that was the happiest time of all. How he would play games with little Marion. And one day, it was so funny. Daddy Foster brought home a dirty little poor, ragged boy and gave him a bath and dressed him in Marion's blue silk dress. And the whole crowd and Mister Walter played on the floor. . . . Marion never forgot that. They laughed so much.

But the laughter was not for long. . . . The Voice!

"Sometimes, Walter, I think that there is an evil

voice calling me away, and that it will bring me fame and ruin." That evil voice calling, calling, calling.

How strange and remorseless is fate! That one with so sweet and kindly a heart, with melodies running through his soul, only delicate and pure in sentiment, should hold so perverse and unhappy a streak, be so weak and vagabond. To fame and ruin! Stephen carried off by his perverse self, left his little wife and child, his mother, and his home. Left that detested store at last. It was better. Everybody said he should get in the swim. Down there in New York they were singing his songs: "Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground," "Oh, Susanna," "Nelly Was a Lady," "Old Dog Tray," "John Brown's Body Lies a Moulderin' in de Grave."

Things were going as the boys used to predict they would. Not simply songs for minstrels or amateur theatricals. But big singers like Patti and Nilsson were doing Foster's numbers for encores, and winning their biggest applause with them. Hundreds of thousands of copies sold, publishers growing rich. Vieuxtemps, the great French violinist, took "Oh, Willie, We Have Missed You," and made his most famous solo of it. Others followed his lead. Foster was famous and New York was the only place he should go.

Fame means life, does it not? Loving and living, drinking and going all the rounds, does it not? One cannot be handsome and famous without living the

life of a hero, is it not so? He was good looking —he was petted—he was made a great idol, Stephen Foster—hurray for Stephen Foster! Come on—join along—spend your money! Drink! Be merry —be a sport—live—LIVE!

. . . The next step is downwards. The good fellow who follows the lure goes downwards. Winks as he passes. Whispers as he staggers by. . . . He tries to get a job. Yes, irony of fate, in another grocery store.

Oh, poor Stephen Foster, what difference does it make? You write a song. What difference how much you get for it? Sell it. Friends are getting fewer. Strength isn't much good any more. Wife is writing you to come home. Marion is writing you, too. A cheap boarding house—a debauch. Shiftless now. You write a song in the morning, you sell it for a mere pittance at noon. You spend the proceeds at night for drink. Fallen lad, maker of beauty and melodies that will ever live, songs that vie with the best of Schubert and better still, of folksongs of all nations. In the gutter. Bellevue Hospital. A bum died last night. Poor Stephen Foster. . . . To fame and ruin. . . .

The most popular songs of Foster are: "Old Folks at Home," "Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground," "Old Dog Tray," "Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming."

Book about the composer: An interesting biography by Milligan.

XV

FACE TO FACE WITH GRIEG

1843–1907

AS we sail along the coast of Norway where the sun dips into the cold dark water, we behold the high reefs and the roughly cast shores. As the myriad of fishing smacks and doughty little crafts crowd about the piers or dip down into the melting horizon, as the misty background of unfamiliar skyline presents the North, back to our minds come the old saga and legends of Vikings in their long-prowed boats. Tall, golden-haired and majestic, all-courageous we picture them as they stood, their beards flying in the winds, their lusty voices singing their chants, their war cries and their dirges.[1]

Resounding in our reincarnate memories we hear "And it was Olaf Trygvason, sailing o'er the North

[1] The author desires to point out to his readers that in writing the Grieg story, he was deeply immersed in the atmosphere of Ibsen's play, "The Warriors at Helgeland," and if there is anything which sounds reminiscent of the great master's text, it will be pardoned, I trust, and found very apropos of the Grieg reality.

sea wide"—the rush of all the Scandinavian myths envelops us. We are on the boats, heaving at the oars, or standing sentinel at the prow, or marching before the company in winter. Orunulf strides aboard the ship, in a white tunic and silver belt, with fur boots and a short sword hanging defiantly at his side, his voice deep and basso, commanding and giving no quarter. Gunaar, the old chieftain, though white-haired and bearded, still stands tall and strong over his tribe and brandishes a spear with aim toward the whale at the boat's side. On him there is a breastplate, on his shoulders hangs a cloak of bearskin. Some of his followers carry axes, some bows and arrows. On the shore, about the boat-shelter, near the low-lying houses are the women. They are high-souled creatures, now dressed in black, short kirtle skirts, cloaks and vivid hats, now prepared to follow the men into battle, helmeted, armed in steel, adept with the sword blades and quick to jump upon the steeds and flash into the wilderness. Their golden hair is loosened and flying in the winter wind. In their hands, if not the sword, is the bow and arrow.

Inside the houses we can see the long wooden tables and benches, we can remember the crowds of men of aboriginal passions and appetites, drinking down the beer and stamping on the floor and banging on the tables and singing loud and boisterously. We can see the ancient dances, the maddened rush of giants about the room.

Our boat, our modern boat, passes in toward the landing, but our reincarnate memories seem to conjure up the dead men in solemn procession, marching out to sea, riding on their black horses, the sound of bells resounding, the kelpies wailing, the waves rushing at each other in mysterious eternal struggle, the ships of the Vikings passing out to sea, to their last strange voyage.

The boat stops at gorgeous Bergen. We land at the passenger pier, which itself smells of the fish and the commerce of the ancient city. From there we journey into the country to Hop, where living at Troldhangen, is the aged Eduard Hagerup Grieg. There is no way to go from the station to the overhanging house of Grieg except by the footpaths. So we set out, breathing joyously of the Northern air, smelling still the salty tang of the ocean which permeates all of Scandinavia, and marching with mythical hordes of Vikings at our side.

Ahead of us on the road, we see two men walking slowly in the direction we are going. They seem to be very well known, and indeed the elder of the two, much beloved. As folks pass them, they bow and the old gentleman is perpetually lifting his hat to the neighbors, who greet him with a degree of reverence that they might show toward the pastor or the mayor.

At our rate of walking, we rapidly gain on the pair and at last come alongside of them and completely forgetting our code of etiquette, stare back

at them to see who these urban celebrities might be, and what they look like. They in their turn, look at us, as if trying to recognize the swift, rushing, unnatural foreigners. . . . The old man lifts his hat and bows to us.

It is Grieg! We recognize him from the pictures.

He is dressed in a gray suit; his white hair is showing beneath his soft felt hat. Over his arm is thrown a gray shawl and he leans heavily on a stick. A dreadfully delicate looking creature, pale, very, and thin as a nervous child. His face has a worn expression as of the remains of a long, serious siege of intense pain. His chin is smooth, on his upper lip is a short, stubby, silken mustache. His body is all in motion, walking with jerky, angular steps, which hitch the shoulders and keep them at irregular heights. His nose is short and rather too full, the skin pale and like a baby's.

Grieg—think of it—meeting him on the road, with the Vikings in mythical hordes at our side and behind us!

He stands in the middle of the path, resting on his cane, generously repeating a welcome to us.

"And you are from America? Ah, it is a great land. It seems so large and mighty in its ambitions and so genuine in its emotions." This is what he says first of all, always thinking, as we discover later, of others, rather than himself. "I should love to visit your country. I have had several kind invitations. And I am not wealthy enough to refuse the

very immense sums which were offered me. I am not wealthy," this he speaks in a tone color which might be described best as pearl-gray, "but to tell you the truth, it seems hard to believe, I couldn't stand the sea trip. And that, despite the fact, that I am writing of fearless, hardy Vikings and the Norsemen of the past and the ocean in all its fury and might! Berger says it's incongruous—don't you, Berger," and he glances with a soft, almost mischievous look in his eye at his companion, a gentleman of middle age, rather heavily set, and unimaginative.

"My Berger—my faithful friend," and Grieg this time gently pats the other on the back and nods to us, as if in explanation of the fact that Berger is perfectly all right, and we need not be disturbed or frightened by him.

"You may laugh, Eduard, you may laugh," Berger whined a trifle, "but I say it is incongruous —yes, impossibly incongruous. That's the only word. Look you, good strangers, here's my friend Grieg. Here. He goes into his room and he locks the door. So. Now look you, good strangers. Pretty soon, Grieg sends for me. 'Berger,' says he, 'Berger, I want you to hear something, I just wrote.' I listen, and by the Holy Grail of the ancients, if he doesn't sit at the piano and make you see living all over again in his weird, uncanny, and unbelievable harmonies, the Vikings. By the seven saints, good strangers, I've heard him in his room when he

was writing, and there are times when the ocean seemed to have taken birth in his house for the way it roared like it does on a winter's night, when the snow is falling and the wind is howling. So I say and you'll have to agree with me, it's strange. No, it's more. It's positively—incongruous. That's the only word. Him not being able to go on the water, when he's the very soul of the ocean."

Grieg puts his teeth over his under-lip and listens to this outburst with his head a bit on the side, a mother watching her precocious child!

"Berger, you see, is a poet in his way," Grieg explains with a light glint of humor in his glistening eye. "Now, there's a real descendant of the old Norns. Behold how big and powerful and brave he looks. Ah, Berger, you should have been the musician and I the looker-on and friend. But listen, don't imagine that Berger isn't a musician. He composed once—just as I did." Again the old man looks mischievously in the direction of his friend.

"My God, won't you forget that! No, he won't forget it. I suppose I'd better tell you before he does and misquote it," Berger stodgily declares in mock anger. "Once we were out rowing. (Oh, yes, it was on a lake—not the ocean, and we were very near shore!) Eduard was composing—he likes to do that in the open air, in nice weather, and likes me to accompany him, and do—the rowing. As he wrote, the breeze carried a bit of the manuscript toward me. I thought I'd have a little joke. I read

the music and hummed it aloud. Eduard looks up wild like. 'Where did you get that,' says he. 'Oh,' says I, 'it just came into my head.' 'Remarkable, indeed, I was just thinking of that myself.' And for days he went around telling the story as an instance that I was a musician after all, a composer —and that here was an extraordinary example of telepathy. Telepathy, ha! That was one on Eduard. Finally I let him in on the joke. You should hear the way he tells the story though, you'd have a very different impression of me!"

Both laughed, looking at each other as only old friends can do, with the telling of an old, old story.

Between the two, we walk and finally Grieg points his stick to a little house way up in the rocks.

"There's Troldhangen," Grieg informs us. "That's where Mrs. Grieg and I have lived for years. Here's my sweetheart. Yes, Nina, here are friends from America. No, not with more offers, just to meet us. We saw them coming up the road. Berger has been telling them stories—at it again. Come, won't you make yourselves comfortable? There, that's better.

"Now what can I tell you? Of myself? There's not so much. It's what we are trying to do here in our national music that is worthwhile. Not of me. Because you see, there's not very much of me, and I've not done a terrible deal of things that make success. When I rummage in my brain-chests for the memories of days long vanished, I find myself all at once in the days of my childhood, remem-

bering the things that gave me some little confidence in myself. For I had very little of that. . . . I was five when I first managed to play some music. I reached up over the keyboard and struck some chords. I was so proud—never have I done anything that made me happier! I wanted to play piano, how I wanted to do it. So my mother taught me, but I was very much shocked. I had to do exercises and terrible things of practice, and if I dreamed or tried to make some melodies, I would hear my mother's voice from her cooking in the kitchen, 'Fie, Eduard, F-sharp, F-sharp not F-natural.' But I hated practice, ooh, how it tortured me. I was always dreaming.

"And at school, the pupils made fun of me and I shunned them because I felt they were so unkind to me. I once mentioned the name of Mozart in school to show that I knew the name of a great composer, and they all nicknamed me Mozart after that. . . . But, anyway, when it came to knowing the scales the old teacher said, 'You are all stupid but Grieg and he is perfect in his lessons of music.'

"Well, there's no doubt of it, the music was with me all of the time. I used to compose when I was about ten. I'll never forget what happened when I was thirteen. I had written in a school copy book 'Variations on a German melody for piano by Eduard Grieg, Opus 1.' I showed it to one of the boys who had been kind to me and he was so excited at a composer being in the class, that he went

running up to the teacher. 'Oh, teacher, oh, teacher, Grieg has got something!' The teacher thought I had contracted some contagious disease. 'Got something? Got what? Oh, music. Well, look you here, young fool and jackanapes. You bring in your regular lessons and leave this stupid work at home.'

"Yet until I was quite old I didn't expect to be a musician. I thought I was to be a pastor! I loved to read poetry and memorize it. All my life I have considered it a lofty privilege to speak or preach before a listening crowd. That is wonderful to be a prophet or a herald or a teacher of fine ideals, to represent some belief or some ambition that the crowds could become fascinated with. Yes, that is always lofty to me. . . . So as a little boy I would capture my father when he wanted to sleep after supper. I'd read him my poems from the book, and I'd say, 'Oh, please, Papa, let me read you just one more, just one—please, please, PLEASE!' . . . And he'd listen.

"I might have never gone into music——"

"Eduard," interrupted Berger, "how can you say that? You would have gone into music if—if *anything* had happened. You would have——"

"Berger, you are irrepressible. Hear me out first; I was saying that I might never have gotten into music if it hadn't been for a young lieutenant. Nina, you remember General Gokalad? He later became a general. But then he was a young lieutenant and my friend. He loved piano and he listened to my

music and encouraged me. . . . But more than he, was the assistance of Ole Bull—oh my! He came to our house and he heard me play and he took me by the shoulders and he said, 'Young man, you will go to Leipzig and there you will study and become a real and worthy musician. . . . Friends, your son has talent. Don't deprive him of opportunity.'

"So there I was just mother's son, aged fifteen, packed off to Leipzig, all alone in the old, shaded city, with the teachers who were cruel to me, and hit me and laughed at me and mocked me and called me stupid, as I guess I was at first, being away from the land I loved and the family I adored and the air that seemed so essential to my life.

"I was there for years, and one day, I remember it with glorious sunshine flooding my heart, Moscheles, our great teacher, said to the other pupils of my playing: 'There, gentlemen, is musicianly performance.' I was walking on clouds for weeks thereafter.

"Then I studied composition, and followed in the lines of the writers of the past. I was nothing different from them. . . . But when I went back home and felt the air and saw the clouds and the mountains and the mists again, a veil fell from off my eyes. . . . I saw that I was to do something different, something that represented my national ideals. So my friend Nordraak and I made a pact. It was this: We would stand for Norwegian music, yes, the real sturdy representation of what our nation

means in history. To depict the virility and candor and native strength of the sagas and legends; yes, those old stories have been the joy and sorrow of my life. Out of them I have moulded sonatas, my ballades, my pieces of every description—everything I have done, that I consider worthwhile has come from that inspiration.

"Always, when I am in the throes or delights of composition, I am torn by old Norn tragedies and history. . . . A weak specimen I am, to be the Chieftain of the Vikings, but that is what I picture myself in my dreams. . . . I am strong, I am brave, I am the leader of the men and the women."

A different Grieg now rises before us, his tender eyes flaming, his gentle little body trembling with emotion. Mrs. Grieg goes forward as if to stop him. She is frightened—this is not good for him, her eyes tell us this—she is always afraid that he will "go off" in a fit like this. Berger now seems a changed man, he is watching his friend, like a hawk.

"Yes, I am the Chieftain, and I am great and strong and powerful. Listen. . . . Let us away, the prey we will fight for, we will take revenge for the wrongs upon us. You can see the warships of our enemies. Farewell. Drink no more than you must. Put the drinking horn away, but use it lest you be deemed womanish. Sharpen your fangs. Up, my wolf cubs. The whales are far out at sea, they rush at one another like a foeman clad in steel. Come to arms; up, wolf cubs. Back, you whining women.

I want men this time and women who have torn out their womanish hearts and are men instead. Ah, listen to this poem I will sing to you. Bang on the tubs, drum on the boats, listen to the runes and the words of my song. Light up the torches. . . . I am the Chieftain bold.

"The heart with woe wounded
Cannot laugh with the Song-God;
Heartbroken, the bard then
Makes song of his hardship.

To me, too, the Song-God
Gave the gift of the glee-men;
Let me make with my heartstrings
My loss loud and mournful.

But a mortal wound, baleful
And heavy, has crushed me,
As if my old bosom
Were crushed between the shields.

Hail ye! my bright riders!
Hail ye! while ye ride there,
My sons! Let the gods' gift
Heal the woe, the world anguish.

Now lifts the storm on the sea,
Now the boats climb on the waves,
Now the oars dip in the deep,
Now the men move to their graves,

Now the Vikings are gone to their doom.
See them in shrouds of the sea,
See them alone in the last long days,
See them in destitute mourning.

Ah, no. The gods are alive again.
They are as mighty as ever they were,
They will wrest the power again.
Look at them conquer.

Long remembered shall these heroes be
In all our northern land,
And our children's tongues shall honor
Those that sleep upon this strand."

Grieg sinks to his chair and coughs terribly. Berger goes over to him and tries to soothe him, while his wife is at his feet.

Grieg opens his eyes and looks sadly and sweetly upon us.

"Look. This melody like this—that I put into one of my biggest works. This old song—listen—see how I've woven it into this song. . . . I'll play you a bit. Nina, come sing one or two of my songs. Lovely voice my wife has. To me it seems a shame we didn't discover what she could do until she was getting old. But even so, my sweetheart has been my best interpreter and we've given many concerts together, haven't we, Nina? Sing—sing a little."

"After you've played a bit, Eduard. Then, that'll be time."

He nods, and plays. In his music there is strength, but also something else—delicacy. He brings the light into dark places, his finely woven fabrics are a tapestry of fairy lore—elfish as the mountain dance of *Peer Gynt's* wanderings—not tragic, but sad, not mournful, but tearful. . . . His performance turns into the music of "Peer Gynt," the part where *Peer* is in the hall of the mountain king and fantasy is depicting the bacchanalian festivities of the fairies, while *Peer*, bold, naïve, uncultured, the playboy of the North goes imaginatively forward, unafraid and unembarrassed before all the crowds of kings and courtiers and nobles.

"That was *Peer Gynt*," Grieg mentions, smiling towards us, adding innocently, "you have possibly heard of it before?"

"Oh, sir," we declare warmly, "everybody knows your music—everybody that knows anything, I mean."

"You are good to say that," he declares, but his nod denies the truth of our words. "Why, look, the other day they played a musical comedy, I think it was called the "Merry Widow." The composer of it made more money out of that music in this country alone than I have made out of all my music, in all the world, all my life. I was given a little pension by our Government which has made it easy for me

to compose. . . . I've directed a singing society and given some concerts and made some tours.

"But do not think I am minding it"—as though throwing off his slight pique at the world's comparative indifference to his art—"I am happy for what I have been able to do. Glad that in some slight way I have been able to translate my country's music for the world's understanding, to revive our ancient mythology and give it modern breath. Indeed I feel honored. My thoughts are still the same as they were when I was a little boy.

"I consider it a lofty thing to speak or play to a listening audience."

He shakes his head many times to emphasize the point. And then noting the serious look on Berger's face, he gets up and gayly taps Berger on the head and asks him if he is going to sleep in front of company.

Important works of Grieg are: Norwegian Folk Songs and Dances; "Peer Gynt Suite," "Bilder aus dem Volksleben," "In Autumn," "Olav Trygvason," "Sigurd Jorsalfar," "Vor der Klosterpforte," "Landerkennung," "Der Einsame," "Aus Holzberg's Zeit," "Bergliot," "Poetische Tonbilder," symphonic pieces, lyric pieces. Many beautiful songs, especially "I Love Thee," and "The Tryst."
Book about the composer: Biography by Ernest Closson.

XVI

FACE TO FACE WITH PALESTRINA[1]

1524–1594

MUSIC was dead.

His holiness, Pope Paul the Fourth, had decreed an end to the music of the church. For, in all truth, it had grown useless and immoral. Instead of being of sanctified, religious spirit, the very chants and creeds were sung to the melodies of street-ballades, of which the words were all too familiar, obstructing and neutralizing the priestly intent. Indecent, highly suggestive themes were set to the most sacred texts. And worse than that, during the prayers, the choirs sometimes recalled and actually used the vulgar words of the coarsest of songs. While priest and bishop knelt meekly before the Almighty, the jarring sound of earthly immorality made ludicrous their sentiments and prayers.

[1] The authentic facts concerning this composer are obscured by available history. Those who have pretended the writing of his biography have disagreed in many details, though the principal information is unquestioned. Therefore I want to make clear that I, too, have analyzed the past and reconstructed it in my own way.

During the noble, devout services and masses, riotous harmonies and inappropriate blastings, seemed to cast a sacrilegious blasphemy over the entire proceeding. . . . A priest in ballet skirt would have been no more incongruous. The musicians had utterly forgotten the function of their writings. They were endeavoring to be overly clever, seeking poses rather than messages. Freakish effects were the craze. Some music was so ingeniously figured out, it could be played upside down as well as in the regular way —even so written that two singers facing each other, one reading from the top, the other from the bottom, would harmonize. Instead of writing music on straight staffs, it was being done in designs of crosses, virginal robes, and the like. . . . The condition was utterly hateful.

Then fell the edict of the Pope. . . . Music was dead. Urged partially by the activities of Luther in his thunderous denunciation of the church, urged partially by his own clear sense of conditions, the Pope ordered all music discontinued. Now it should be remembered that outside the church there were practically no opportunities for musicians. The church was the mainstay of the singers, the composers, and organists. Also it was the only place where the people might listen to beautiful harmony. . . . Music was dead. For months, not a sound was heard throughout the temples. An actual reform must ensue before music might return to the Sistine Chapel or to the most insignificant of temples of the

Roman Catholic Church, in any country of the Catholic world.

"Music is the most beloved of the arts by God," proclaimed the Pope. "He knows how His spirit is cast over His people by Music. Yet when Music is disguised and made to serve His enemies, then it must be considered that Satan is at work, attempting to mock and dispute with His message."

It was plainly evident at once that the loss of the music was disastrous. What to do about it?

The Cardinal of Trent, chief adviser to the Pope, thereupon was designated to take the whole matter of music in the church under his advisement. He was urged to confer with whomsoever might be instrumental in instituting a reform. First the Cardinal of Trent appointed eight other cardinals, from the length and breadth of the Catholic world. There were included the music lovers, Charles Borromeo, who was later sainted, and Vitelozzo Vitelozzi; also were selected eight of the Papal Singers. And they sat in judgment upon the exiled Muse.

Said one cardinal: "When at the last services of Holy Week, the choir sang, methought I heard a herd of pigs grunting and squealing, for I could not hear a word of the prayers. I can take you down to the farm and set a fire under the pig-sty and I will promise you a sweeter pleasure for the ears than comes out of the music-balcony at the Chapel."

The Cardinal of Trent in his red robes of state frowned upon these frivolous words which he must

needs admit were true. His white hair fell upon his great ermine cape, the Cappa Magna, the full official robe of the College of the Cardinals. As he held his crucifix in his hand he nodded his head and said, "It is right. At a recent service, the music resulted in such howls, bellowings, gargling, and the like, that they seemed like January cats, rather than May birds."

"I do not think music has ever helped at all," said the Cardinal of Touraine. "Why not listen to the words alone. They tell their message. Music at best only interferes."

"My good brother," cried Charles Borromeo, "you don't mean that. Chiefest of the beauties of our services are dulled without our singing. In Paradise, the angels sing—we must try to approach that ecstacy in our religious appeal to mankind. Dear brother, I do heartily confess you the errors of the musicians—we have allowed our services to be dominated by the Flemish, who have run away with themselves. . . . But, brother, to me, who am a lover of the art, I say to you that only in music can the Word of God be sensed by man. The music creates the proper spirit in the listener. It is a religious aid, music, I know. Indeed, my brother, you who are so eloquent a preacher, beside whom there are few equals—believe me, brother, you cannot in your finest words preach the kind of sermon that music tells. Some music is the best key to the heart, the solvent of pain and sin.

"Music is our finest ally—shall we lessen our ability to cope with the wickedness of our age by exiling music? No, my brother. Reform the evils, yes. But let us hasten to restore the beauty of our services."

"Very well spoken," declared Vitelozzi, "the only thing to do, is to lay the foundations for the reforms. We must demonstrate to the Holy Father by tests and proofs that music does not obscure the Word of God, but enhances it. . . . We need a reformer. Who is to be the man?"

Borromeo had in mind the very man, Sante of Palestrina. Thus, in casting among the musicians who could aid in laying the foundation for Church music, the election fell on the said John Peter, Louis Sante, or as they termed him in Italian, Giovanni Pierluigi Sante. He was of the town of Palestrina, and so was known as Sante de Palestrina.

A thin, tall, pale faced man was this Sante of Palestrina. When he entered the Council Chamber, at the call from the Cardinal, he was trembling and afraid. For every time an edict from the Papal Court had come to him, in the past, it had meant a change in his fortunes for bad or good, mainly for bad. Meekly he fell upon his knees and waited the word.

Said the Cardinal of Trent slowly and solemnly: "The music of the Church is sinful, you know it. It has the character of a lewd woman at the altar. It is a defamation of His Holy Name. Therefore

in order to protect the purpose of our services, His Holiness the Pope has ordained that music is condemned, is dead——"

The man of Palestrina shuddered.

"Music is dead—unless some one save it. Who is to be that some one? You? . . . We have called you here, knowing the things you have accomplished in the past, to ask your advice, to discover from you whether your art can be—ought to be restored to its proper dignity in the Church, perhaps to place upon your shoulders the task of saving music from exilement."

The old man sensed the gravity of the moment.

"It is true, Fathers"—he again fell on his knees—"It is right that in its present form we have debased the services. And why? During these empty months, how dull and uninspiring the church has seemed. Restore our art, don't excommunicate it. Why—Music represents so great an influence upon the mind of mankind. It is intended not only to cheer them but also to guide and control them. Sometimes my art can be perverted. But blame those who excite men, blame those who incline men to sin, and immorality and lasciviousness." The old man crossed himself reverently. "In my younger days, I, too, had succumbed to the temptation to misuse music. I confessed myself long since and have been forgiven in His Holy Name. I understand now. You ask me, if music can and ought to be preserved. I cry yes—and I would consider it a gracious duty

to be allowed to show the way—to indicate the robes with which music may be adorned."

The Cardinal of Touraine leaned forward and holding high the crucifix, asked solemnly:

"Do you believe you can compose the sort of masses which will save all that exists of good and uproot the evil? Could you swear to undertake the holy task in proper mood and sufficient courage if this Council should put it in your keeping? Do you feel you have the ability to solve the problem?"

Sante of Palestrina again knelt, kissed the crucifix and murmured a prayer of devotion to his duty, as it had been told to him. He raised his eyes to God and humbly said, "I undertake the task, Fathers."

"Go then and fulfill your duty. Report to us within the month or longer if you require the time."

Sante of Palestrina bowed his way from the room of the Cardinals and repaired to his home. It was a cold, sad place. All about him was ruin, disappointed sorrow. In the dark hours of the night, Sante prayed for power and confessed all of his long forgiven sins. He sought to clear his soul, clarify his mind. He knelt before his wife's picture and prayed for her aid. In life she had been his constant companion. For a long time they had been together until her death. He seemed to be carried back to the day he asked Lucrezia Goris to be his wife. It seemed like centuries ago. So much had happened since then; it couldn't be that one man had suffered so much.

Giovanni had been a good boy. He had loved his father and his mother, he had said his prayers, he had followed the ten commandments, and all the rules of the catechism. He had never "gone back" on his mother, who sold her little piece of land that Giovanni might be taught his music lesson. He had sung in the streets in sheer joy when he was studying with Claude Goudimel, the stern Flemish music teacher, who afterwards was murdered. The chapel master of the Church of Sante Maria Maggiori had heard the youthful voice and taken him in and given him a place at a little salary that did help. Orlando di Lasso, Knight of the Golden Spur, had urged him on—di Lasso himself!

Then had come the marriage. Giovanni had loved Lucrezia, God knows how she, too, worshipped him, and their four little ones, whose coming made the living so much more difficult, though so infinitely more worthwhile. As master of the chapel boys in Palestrina, his income was slight. Suffering and poverty are not good fare for voices, and composition didn't bring a livelihood of any consequence.

In a moment of inspiration Sante de Palestrina had dedicated a volume of masses to the Pope, Julius the Third. They had pleased the Pontiff, although as the old man now remembered, these were the very anthems he now regretted having written, they were too licentious, they were of the vulgar genre, of the street ditty caliber—light, all too human.

But Pope Julius had liked them and he wished

to take the musician under his wing. A powerful protector he proved. Due to Sante's troubles, his voice had fled. Yet the Pope admitted him to the Chapel of the Vatican as one of the choir at ten dollars a week. This had brought almost luxury to the immigrants from Palestrina. His fellow choir-members were angry. The Pope had thrust into their midst a screechy voiced fellow, who, moreover, was married, who had known a woman. The Pope had put three others who were married into the choir. It was scandalous. Don't think that the poor Giovanni didn't make himself worth his price. Though his voice was not good, he kept writing music for the Pope which delighted the Holy Father, who quickly stilled all dissension.

But the good fortune was short-lived. The good Pope Julius died, and his successor quickly changed affairs.

"I have learned that there are in my Chapel, four singers who are married!" declared Pope Paul the Fourth. "This is outrageous and against all the principles of the Church. Celibates are the only ones who may be permitted to participate in the services."

Four children at home, wife ill, income stopped. This was too much for the sickly Sante, who took to his bed and almost never left it. Word of the havoc caused by his order was conveyed to the Pope and a small pension was awarded to the Palestrinian. Years of suffering, then another triumph—the

famous "Improperia" for Good Friday services—a lovely mass which will be sung as long as the Church of Rome survives.

He had so little upon which to live. Once he had sent some music he dedicated to the King of Spain who was gracious in his thanks, but frugal of payment.

Here was the place the wife had died in suffering. There were the chairs of the three beloved sons, who had died, even as they first flowered, giving hints and proofs of musical genius, which would carry on the work of their father. In the other room, drunk and swearing, lay that other son, black sheep of the family, Igine, worthless, disreputable—an additional burden for his unhappy parent.

All night Sante reviewed his past life, confessing his sins and the sins of his family.

"Cleanse my soul, oh Lord," he prayed again and again. "Give me to write that which will be holy and yet beautiful, that which will speak the mystery, the goodness, the justice of God to all mankind. Give me to speak to human hearts in a way which will enchant and purify, spreading the Word and the Gospel. Give me the power to save our beautiful art and speak to your disciple on earth, the Holy Father, bless his name, to be a listener, sympathetic and responsive. Amen."

Finally, in the mind of the composer, all his earthly woes faded from his memory, and a vision of Paradise entered his soul. He wrote gladly, in a

glory of inspiration. Not one mass, but three. He wrote them before he touched his bed, before he permitted sleep or food to comfort and strengthen him.

. . . . . .

In the high vaulted organ loft, the man of Palestrina sat. The Pope was on his throne, the Cardinal of Trent and the eight cardinals of the Council were in their allotted places with the whole College of the Cardinals—a picture in red.

The worshippers, the priests, the novices, the nuns, the singers were present. Then, noble, profound, majestic, came the notes of the music, blending with the voices, creating indeed a heaven on earth. Rolling, the harmonies, rich and pure, went on their way upwards, purging hearts of their sins, creating a new life for Music.

The Pope raised his eyes in benign blessing. The Cardinals shook their heads in approval. The people did now know what it meant to art, but strongly they felt the intense religious message of this music.[1]

The Pope sent for the composer after the Chapel services were at an end, and permitting Sante to kiss his garment, the Holy Father blessed him anew, and murmured:

"You have shown us, my son, the power of music to interpret the Gospel. It must be such music the angels sing in the new Jerusalem. Music is

[1] Later, in history, the commentaries learned to call him "Saviour of Music."

saved. I appoint you at twenty-five scudi a month, music master and composer of St. Peter's Cathedral."

When the news of Sante's achievement spread through the Catholic world, all rejoiced at the resumption of the music in its new form.

Fifteen hundred singers from the City of Palestrina traveled on foot to Rome and marching down the streets, sang from the works of their illustrious citizen, on whom they conferred the distinction of the name "Palestrina"—that henceforth he should be known as Palestrina, after his birthplace, which now was honored to think of him as their most famed son—the figure who was to stand in history more lastingly than the whole city with all its residents.

Palestrina never knew how famous he was. He never realized in his pure modesty that he had done a work which would never die! . . . The last years of his life, he wrote more and directed his choir and . . . died in bed, alone.

Important works of Palestrina are: "Æterna Christi Munera," "Dies Sanctificatus," "Assumpta est Maria." Madrigals, motets, hymns, lamentations, offertories.

Books about the composer: Biographies by Winterfield, Baini, Waldersee, Bartolini, and Cametti. Also Ernest Oldmeadow's excellent essay in his "Great Musician Series."

XVII

FACE TO FACE WITH GOUNOD

1818–1893

"I WILL not permit another soul to bother me; I will not interrupt my writing with listening to such stupidity." Charles Francois Gounod was in a temper. He had just had an exasperating experience. Another self-styled singer had taken advantage of his well-known hospitality and had imposed herself on his time and good nature. "To think of it! She had better go home and take up some other art or job. I told her so. And she flew into a rage. I said, 'Madame, you did not come here for criticism; you want me to flatter you. Much good it would do you when you get before an audience, to say that Gounod likes your voice! Do you think that will prevent your being hissed?' Nobody would ever think this is a musician's studio. It sounds more like an ordinary inquiry office. What won't they ask me next? I expect somebody soon to come for a bottle of shoe-blacking. I will shut my doors; I will issue an order to my servants that

no other whose name I do not know may be permitted to come in. Everybody must suffer for the offenders. My music suffers now!"

It was in the palatial Parisian residence of Gounod, the open sesame for any who might seek admittance. An audience with the maestro was easily obtained—this was known all over Paris—he was so good-natured. People came with manuscripts of unfledged melodies suggesting that Gounod petition for their publication. Over-young or elderly sopranos came with unbelievable versions of *Marguerite* hoping that they might immediately be engaged for "Faust." They came with songs of other composers, cheap, tawdry and flamboyant as evidences of their voices. Several managers wanted special work to inaugurate the new theaters. A manager in New York cabled for a work to use at the opening of the Casino. Publishers who had refused the young Gounod now importuned him in the day of his fame. It was enough to drive a man mad. For hundreds of times the maestro had threatened to keep them out. Now it was done, and Gounod might work.

He adjusted his velvet cap, went back to his piano and played over the last phrases he had written. He corrected the manuscript, and rapidly scribbled a few more bars.

There was a little sound—was it a mouse? No —he continued writing; then it was repeated. The maestro looked about him, and behind him, and

what do you think he saw? A fragile little miss, with her left hand pressed nervously to her chin and her right hand with a dirty music-portfolio, clutched in back of her.

Gounod was angry—here was another aspirant. He wheeled around at her, determined to make an example of her case, but noting the manner of the little maid, his expression turned into a smile. He lifted his cap, and bowed: "What can I do for you?"

"I wanted to beg you to hear me sing, maestro."

Gounod bit his lips, looked again, and then—"I am positive that you have a voice," he declared. "There is a light in your eye. The voice is not only in the throat—it is first in the eye."

So the rule was broken again. The dear man stroked his great beard, parted in the center, and fanned back across his breast; listened attentively and clapped his hands when he had heard the girl. In a few moments, he was seated with her talking as though he had known her for years—and she, the little frightened suppliant, was pouring out her heart to him, knowing he would really try to help her. Such was the way he took the pledge and broke it time and again. Over sixty-five, tall, erect, lithe, quick, and nervous in his movements, he looked rather the part of a successful banker or manufacturing chemist, than a musician and composer—who dealt in melodies and dramas of LOVE! His head was large at the top, with a massive Jovian brow,

the eyes luminous and masterly, placed far apart and seemingly looking from afar. A merry twinkle in the eye came and went from time to time. He wore in addition to the velvet cap, a silken smoking jacket. Around his throat a handkerchief was loosely tied, another mannerism and fetish to aid him in his composition.

If you had not known Gounod as France's most popular composer, the idol of young ladies of all ages and romantics of all kinds, never would you have suspected it by looking at him.

This was the man who translated "Romeo and Juliet" into passionate music; this was he who wrote those strangely physical strains in the arias of *Marguerite*, the girl who sings more sensually and sexually than any figure in opera, not excluding *Isolde* and *Carmen*.

Therefore, let us hasten to hear him as he talks with the little aspirant to music, the girl who but a few moments ago came out of nowhere into his life.

"Yes, my lady, you have a voice. Cultivate it, Above everything, follow the dictates of your ambitions and the call of your inspiration. Nothing is sufficient to act as an objection. I have no use for the girls and the boys who let a single thing stand in the way of their careers. Those who cannot surmount the objections of friends and relatives and the seeming obstacles of fate and environment do not deserve to get ahead. I always say to the young

novice on the brink of a career these words: 'How much does it mean to you, that you sing or that you write, eh? That is the point. Are you willing to give up everything if necessary, eh?' That is the way to figure it. If you came to me, little woman, with a question that involved any problem, I would answer you in the same way. If you wanted to know whether you could enter the convent, I would say the same words; if you wanted to know whether you should elope, I would use the same method of arriving at a decision.

"You and I are strangely similar in our desires and our personalities; yes, I an old man, you, a pretty young woman. I about to end the work of life, you about to begin it—we are alike. I can see it in your eyes and in the eager voice and in the manner of your behavior. We are alike. I always felt the same kind of a call. When I was the merest child, I heard everything in the form of music. 'That woman sells her vegetables in a minor key,' I would say to my mother. When I was not more than three, I astounded my father, the famous painter, by saying of the barking of a dog, that it was in the key of G, but it went out of tune. I would stand by my father's side, as he painted and sing little melodies of my own finding. But father didn't want me to be an artist, we had money and he didn't wish me to suffer. But he died and we were not so well provided for. When I was first introduced at school, my mother had a whispered conference with the prin-

cipal, the purpose of which was to keep me away from music. As she left, he eyed me significantly with 'He won't be a musician.' I heard it and cried bitterly. 'What's the matter, little man?' he asked. 'I must be a musician,' I sobbed. 'Oh please,' I begged. Curiosity overpowered the old man. 'Why,' he asked. 'I want to write.' 'Can you write?' he demanded, and with that he picked up a book of poems saying, 'Here, go write some music for this.' In five minutes I came back. 'Already?' he asked bewildered. 'Sure,' I responded quickly, and wanted to go to the piano. It was a curious thing, with accompaniment and melody. The principal was charmed. He took me in his arms and said, 'You *will* be a musician.' And he wrote to my mother to persuade her."

Gounod laughed boyishly. "But even now; and thousands of thousands have listened to my efforts, some critics will have it that no matter how long I try I won't be a musician.

"I can never understand some critics. 'Your music is too melodic,' they say; 'Not enough philosophy.' Suppose I am not a philosopher. What then? Art is happiness, and I have been happy in my music. Who are those who say that all music must be of their brand? I have shed tears in my composing, and that is enough for any creator, to have it said of him that he shed tears, while he did his work. But that is not what you want to know, is it?" Gounod ejaculated, recalling the purpose of

his caller. "Aha, once I remember when I was a little lad, somebody was trying to make me give up my ideas of music. 'Come,' said an old gentleman, 'there is nothing in music. What can you get out of music? Who thinks of musicians.' I was angry. I shouted, 'Don't you think anything of Mozart, huh?' 'Well, if one is to be a Mozart, that is different.' 'But what if one is to be a Gounod, eh?'

"Of course you have had no music in your family, my dear. That is a bad sign but makes not so much difference. In my house, my father being a painter, that helped me; my mother loving music and being my first teacher, that also aided. When I was a small child my mother took me to the opera, and I was so excited I couldn't sleep that night. My grandmother on my mother's side was a very wonderful actress, thus I had art and the stage and music in my blood. But that you haven't any ancestral gifts, makes no difference. Have you the right idea?

"Let me ask you this, are you in love?"

The young woman turned red and redder. Noting her embarrassment, Gounod said, "You don't understand. I mean are you in love with your music, not with some individual."

"But I am, maestro," she whispered, "I am in love with music, and also with an individual. It is because, maestro, that I love Jean so much, that I want to sing, to sing so beautifully about it. It is because when at night I think of him, that I can't resist a desire to go out in the fields from my house,

and under the moon to sing softly and gently. Is that wrong, maestro?"

"That is neither wrong nor bad. In fact, that is the proof that you are meant for music."

"Are *you* in love," the young lady asked, bending over to him, her eyes wide opened.

"Yes, my dear, but I am—that is I am in love in a different way. Now, I mean. I am old you see. But when you speak of love, I am no longer old. I am absolutely full of it. I have crammed great gobsful of it into my music."

Indeed he had, this master musician of passion and sex. Music was to him an exultation; it was for him a ravishment. All through his life, the soul of the man sought for some means of giving itself into the vast accord of life, and its illimitable meaning.

He was a boy that dreamed of mystic things; he loved his mother with the whole heart of him, she was the saint of all saints, the goddess of the gods. He worshipped her, wrote songs to her, kissed the hem of her dress and was unconsciously her little sweetheart.

When he became a young man, he knelt at the throne of God; religion became the flame which burned up his being. Then the priesthood beckoned him and for a time, his self-expression went into religious music, perhaps the best of the kind he ever wrote.

There was at school a young classmate named

Charles Gay, also studying for musician. One day Gay became a novice of the priesthood. He had given up his career of art for God. The sacrifice of Charles Gay preyed on the mind of Charles Gounod, and for a period of several years he was of the church, his name became Abbe Gounod and he attracted new youths to the orders while his musical outpourings were matter only for religious services. Here it should be added, parenthetically, that Gounod's masses were accepted as religious orgies by some of the ladies.

It has always seemed to me that the monastery and the convent protect those who might have been great lovers flowing over with a sentiment and affection, for is not their creative sense being expressed in another manner; their lives are chaste; they are celibates, but they throw themselves into the arms of an all-loving partner. In the cloisters, the nuns are overflowing with the same manifestation of sex which the more worldly creatures express in more common ways. A celebrated writer on love has indicated that the very romantic men and women turn their emotions into the channels of religion, of music, of art—and think that they are chaste!

Gounod soon gave up the idea of the priesthood. When I think of him, and his music and its meaning, these old French lines ring in my ears:

"I'll never be a nun, I trow, while apple bloom is
white as snow;

I'll never wear nun's black and white while nightingales make sweet the night.
Ah, listen, 'tis the nightingale. He singeth of the sore distress.
Of many ladies loverless. Thank God, no song for me."

And no song for Gounod! Leaving the church behind him, he next paid homage to the flesh of man. He was still young when he met Madame Viardot, the noted prima donna, and when she heard some of his music, she fell in love with him. Indeed, it was she who suggested that he write the music for his first opera, "Sappho."

"I will sing in it if you will write it," she said, and that was enough for any composer to know he would therefore be successful. That episode with Viardot following hard upon the adventure in the cloisters gave Gounod both a glimpse of God and the devil. Then came "Faust," with the story of *Mephistopheles* and *Marguerite.* Gounod, more than any composer who ever lived, sang a pæan of joy for all that love signifies. He did it as many of his contemporary literateurs wrote their novels. The romanticism of de Musset's poems, limpid, blushing with intimate confessions, is the nearest in literature that I find for a comparison. "Faust" has nothing in it that tells of spiritual attraction for men and women. Poor *Marguerite* is driven by *Mephistopheles'* prompting; and *Juliet* is not the

angelically praying girl of Shakespeare's origin; she is more of a mortal lover.

The erotic muse of Gounod led him to build up a strange combination of compositions. She put words and unusual ideas into his head.

"I am an idolizer," Gounod continued as he advised the young visitor, "I always cast myself at the feet of that which I am in love with—and now, an old man, I have thrown off the youth's impetuosity and returned to my first love, religion. Again I am writing music for the church, all my zeal and desire and passion have been cleansed white and pure, with heavenly coloring."

"Young lady, keep to your love of your Jean, but never let your Jean interfere with your love for your voice. Neither let a single thought interfere with the progress of your muse. If your very soul must go to purgatory for its offenses against the code of life, send it gracefully, and if you can do that, you will become famous and will make thousands adore you. Good-by, and come again, when you are ready. But do not marry. I am married. That is different. Some day I will explain that to you. Good-by."

As the girl went out, Gounod returned to his score of "Stabat Mater."

Is there anything so difficult to understand about the man Gounod and his music? Not for me, no more than I find an impossible mystery as I walk along the darkened country pathway at night, and see lovers arm in arm, gazing transfixed into the eyes

of each other. They are in love; Gounod was in love. His music is always in love, and if you hear it, it will help you to be in love!

Important works of Gounod are: "Faust," "Romeo and Juliet," "Sappho," "Queen of Sheba," Solemn Mass, "Gallia," "Saltatello," "The Redemption," "Life and Death," "Marie Stuart," Requiem, "Fernanda," "The Doctor in Spite of Himself," "Polyeucte," "Jeanne d'Arc."

Books about the composer: Claretie's "Life of Gounod," Weldon's "Gounod," Biography by Paul Voss; "Memoirs."

XVIII

FACE TO FACE WITH COUCY[1]

About 1160–1192

HEAR ye! Hear ye! It was in the days of King Richard of England, Richard of the Lion Heart. The most kingly of all kings —he was the soul of magnanimity, the most generous and forgiving of judges, the fieriest of fighters, a veritable lion in combat. Woe to the enemies of Richard; honored the friends by his smiles. Handsome, tall and lithe as the old Greeks, Richard knew how to fling his javelin, knew how to sing his gentle lays with the best of the troubadours.

Such was the nature of Richard that even during the height of the combat he preferred to have his knightly troubadours about him, singing and play-

[1] While authentic in its main outline, the present subject is largely of a fictitious character. Coucy, the foremost of the early troubadours, is brought back to life in order that we may remember that period in our musical development. For the troubadours and the minnesingers were the forerunners of composers and performers. Coucy's songs (the texts) are still to be read.

ing, not only of his royal graces but of the gentlest songs of love.

Old England did not know how to sing such songs as Richard loved. Ever since the king could remember his heart had longed for the beauties of Provence, in the sunniest, cosiest part of France. When fates made him the king, then Richard followed his desires and moved into France, right into Provence, close by the Château de Coucy.

The king knew that the sires of Coucy were knights of the greatest valor and spirit. There chivalry reigned at its height. The sires of Coucy were more powerful than many kings—not more powerful than Richard; aye, indeed not, for Richard was of the Lion Heart and he must be obeyed. Aye, more, he was loved. The sires of Coucy loved him, too. But mainly Raoul de Coucy, Chatelain de Coucy, prime singer of all Provence, loved him.

It was the delight of Richard's heart to sit apart with Raoul de Coucy and listen to the beautiful chansons he would sing, with his lyre drawn to him, his voice lifted in inspiration. Ah! those troubadours of old Provence—knights and princes they were, making poetry and music for the art of it, for the love of it—never receiving pay, considering beneath them the musicians who take pay—growing eloquent with the poems, fables, romances, and stories which they sung of, invented, just like the Greeks of Homer's day. It was Dante's joy to know the troubadours, other kings than Richard—Al-

fonso, William, and many more of true nobility worshipped at the feet of these native musicians.

Richard's favorite was Coucy. What a picture he made! In full armor he would tramp down the ancient steps of the citadel, his head erect, singing to the skies of his love, of his love. Behind him as he walked was his assistant, the jongleur who played accompaniments to his solo, singing to his love, to his love.

Coucy loved the beautiful Mme. de Fayel. Who did not love her? But Coucy was not only in love, he was loved. Ah! fate is a miserable wretch. Who would have dreamed that the Baron de Fayel could have won such a wife? He never won her; he took her.

What a creature was Fayel! A brute of the worst nature. In the province they called him "Butcher." He was forty, she was seventeen. He dragged her to his palace and her parents never winced—they were paid, the wretches. He could buy almost anything he wished, except the little one's love.

She was kept there in his palace, like a little flower deprived of the sunshine. When on occasion the Baron de Fayel drove out to travel through the province, madame was taken along. If she but glanced at the handsome cavaliers the husband flared at her. With her eyes cast down, she would peep through the long lashes at other men and compare their beauty of body and freshness of manner with the Butcher. He was big and ugly, with jaws like an

animal. They were big, too, but their faces were smooth and rosy—not white and ghastly. There was something kindly in their ways, they seemed to look back at the little woman with chivalrous air. Sometimes they would talk to her and say: "Lady, do you order what you will and I will do your bidding, considering it an honor therein." Fayel would thunder: "Madame cannot hear you; she is concentrated in her prayers to her God," so that she never answered them.

It was only when the Château de Fayel was open for receptions that a tiny bit of freedom was won. The king of France would visit the baron and the grim old palace would shine with a ray of sunshine. The king demanded all the attention of his retainer, de Fayel, and little wife would steal away and look out on the marching men, without those cruel eyes piercing her. That was wonderful. She would see the splendid men, the beautiful bodies. They were young.

Oh, it was a great day for the Mme. de Fayel when Richard, King of England, visited at the château. With him were many men, but with him was one. She had often listened to the voice of Coucy, as it was carried on the breezes up to her window at night. She had often wondered if those love words were for her. But now she knew, for he looked at her always as he sang, whether the words were of the king or of Fayel, or of war, or of love.

Richard stayed for a week at the château. It was the longest space of freedom the little woman had ever known. Not only did she look on Coucy. She was alone with him for many delicious, stolen hours. He would whisper his love songs in her ear. He would chat his love-theme in at her window at night.

"Sweet lady, did I but dare to speak my love. If your fine eyes, wherein one can but read your goodness—if your dear eyes would but look down upon me, if your ears were but attentive to my song, to my supplication—you would hear, you would see that I love no one but you, and that my heart is but a happy slave to yours. Dear lady, you have given a delightful prison to my heart, and it but begs always to be thine, and always faithful."

Clever Coucy, dreamer, poet, musician—for you the realization of all your ideals—for little Mme. Fayel, the flowering of her youth.

But ho!

Hear ye! Hear ye! The men of Richard leave Provence this very week. Another holy crusade is to be made. The land of Palestine, the city of Jerusalem must be recovered to the Christian peoples, recovered at last from the infidels who defame and defile the Sepulchre of Jesus. Jerusalem was held by Saladin, captain of the Islamites.

Who so well fitted to head the third crusade as Richard, the noble, divine, big hearted Richard? Every one rushed to arms, soldiers, knights, princes,

fighting for the opportunity of marching side by side with King Richard.

The Red Cross! Every crusader mounted one on his shoulder; red stuffs and vestments of every kind were torn into straight pieces to make the crosses.

Coucy, would Coucy go? Ask rather if the sun will set to-night. Knights left their palaces, men left their wives, all rushed forward to aid in the precious struggle.

Mme. de Fayel asked the Baron to go, but the wily husband suspected something was wrong, and stayed at home with her.

Now watch the advance of Richard down the Italian shores, up to Acre, and the capture of the city. Watch now the march through the Holy Land, the Christians once more having gained a footing. Step by step Jerusalem is approached, Saladin the Islam struggling with Richard's men every inch of the way. At last, near Christmas, Richard was just outside the Holy City.

How Coucy sang now to cheer the king and men. He would tell in verse and music of things they loved to hear—of old Provence and its sunny beauties. He would sing of love:

"A new love possesses my spirit, and inspires me to sing of the loveliest lady in the world—I yield to my heart beats—I abandon myself to joy—Faithful, to please the beauteous one I love, must I sing, but of her, all my thoughts are of my sweet friend,

the queen of my heart—would my heart love, dare I go against it? No, it is for me to obey.

"But if my lady, whose name promises so much sweetness, has naught but ingratitude, farewell to all my joy.

"Alas, if I were unhappy, what would I do? Oh, such tender eyes, such a radiant face. Her charms, so perfect—such a stature, such arms, such a mouth.

"Yet could I blame her if she but pardoned my love, and so prolonged my life—yes, her pardon were a kindness."

In other spirit he would sing, "The year has changed his mantle cold of wind, of rain, of bitter air." In martial mood his words would ring to spur the tiring spirit on. "Up, up to arms and down the knaves. Will knights thus languish at their schemes?"

Richard would sit there listening intently; oftentimes he would answer Coucy in verse and music, too.

But aside with music now. The Turk is up and doing. Saladin is on the march. To-night all must be done or all is lost. See Coucy in the front rank with his spear, armored to the top of his head. His helmet is forward, his spear is out. He engages in hand to hand combat, and all the while he sings: "On to the fray, in the name of God and Christ." But see, he stumbles. He is hit, he falls, they carry him back to the tent, where Richard sits.

"My Coucy, my troubadour, my singer of songs,"

the good king moans, "you are badly hurt. Courage, my Coucy, you will live."

"I would that I could live, your humble servant, to go on fighting and singing to help you win your holy war. But, good king of the lion's heart, I am slain."

"Coucy, you have been a good friend to me. Tell me if there is anything on your soul which you would have me know; anything which you would have me do for you as a last payment to a dear friend?"

"Good king, listen closely. I have sung to you of a lovely maiden who is all that good womanhood can be—beautiful, chaste, brilliant, and adorable—held by a hated husband for her beauty as a slave. I will tell you her name, she whom I have worshiped these many years. It is the Mme. de Fayel. She loves me, too, good king. When I have died this night, have your most trusted man take out the heart of me, and carry it tenderly back to her I love, and say: 'It is my all. You held it since first I saw you. Keep it now though I am yours no more.' "

Richard listened and the lion's heart became like a lamb, as he said the wish would be fulfilled to the letter.

Next day, when Coucy, singer of songs, had been laid away a messenger sped back from the ranks of Richard's crusade, back to sunny Provence, with a precious packet. It was delivered to the lady he loved.

But the Baron de Fayel had observed the mes-

senger, had listened to the message, and in fury determined on a brutal revenge, exactly as the butcher he was, might have been expected to do.

A feast was made, at which the neighboring villagers were invited, and the Lady de Fayel for the first time was seated at the head of the table. Her eyes were still red from weeping, these many days, and her thoughts were far away. But my lord was happy to-night and all the neighbors observed this rare behavior in him—especially his anxiety to please his lady.

Toward the middle of the feast a great dish was brought upon the table and laid before the mistress of the palace.

"A special delicacy for my dear lady, a little roast of rare concoction," the Baron cried. "Eat of it—as it has come from far for you."

My lady ate, amazed to think her lord had done anything for her—the first time in her memory. The feast wore on, and ended, the neighbors went away.

It was time for bed. Then Mme. de Fayel went to her room. Carefully she locked her door, and opened the drawer to find her precious packet. It was gone! She looked everywhere, but it had disappeared!

What was that she felt piercing her heart. Drawn by some magnetism she looked upward, and there, standing over the transom, was the Baron de Fayel, watching her with a laugh.

"You are looking for something, my lady?" he asked.

She dropped her eyes in submissive manner.

"Do not look any more, my lady. The heart of Coucy, the singer of songs, troubadour to Richard Cœur de Lion, has been roasted and served up to you this very night at the feast, my lady."

A shriek, and silence.

When morning came and consciousness returned the Lady de Fayel opened her eyes and looked defiantly at the vengeful husband.

"You gave me such a good dish last night, my lord, that another morsel of food shall never pass my lips, for even now, I die."

XIX

FACE TO FACE WITH SPOHR

1784–1859

EVERY day we receive news of some famous violinist whose virtuosity in foreign climes astounds the world; the cables are sizzling, managers vie with each other for contracts; there is much ado, passing of stories, use of advertising. Indeed our curiosities have won us, before the artist has yet touched his feet in town. Great halls are engaged and their entire capacity sold weeks before the début. The critics are in a frenzy of expectation and go down to hear, pencils sharpened. . . . And in the midst of all the hulabaloo, the violinist makes his bow, and plays his best, whatever that may be. He does not worry about business matters. He leaves that to others. He receives his profits, or losses, in a systematic manner. Change the situation. Imagine the managerial system out of our musical life, no newspapers to carry the news of recitals broadcast.

Indeed, think of Heifetz, Elman, Kubelik, Kreis-

ler, coming to our city, unheralded, unknown, except possibly for letters of introduction, establishing themselves as the guests of some patron, calling on this merchant, that banker, and the other local musicians, presenting the letters of introduction, meeting the immediate acquaintances of the persons addressed in the notes of introduction, and their acquaintances, playing a bit privately to excite interest, and finally announcing a concert by mail, handbills, circulars, word of mouth, privately and personally selling the tickets to the recipients of said letters, their acquaintances, etc., and so gaining the much-sought opportunity of making some money and reputation.

There will be some who will argue that such elementary conditions might make success of a more democratic quality; putting all on an equal footing; eliminating the forced effect of heavy advertising and salesmanship; letting the art speak for itself, as it were. At any rate that's the way they did in the day of Louis Spohr, one of the greatest composers for the violin.

Let us pretend we are residents of Paris, in the year 1820. That we are of one of the finest families, having friends in the principal capitals of Europe. . . . Late one afternoon, a carriage draws up before the door. Out steps a tall, well-built gentleman of blond, Apollo-like features, who helps from the carriage, a pretty, diminutive lady. They pull our bell, we are quite surprised, though strangers

often drop in upon us. The visitors are ushered into the sitting room, and shortly thereafter—sufficiently thereafter, properly to impress the two with the fact that we have been busy upstairs and can't understand that we should be visited at this time—we appear. Gentleman and lady rise and politely bow as we enter, the gentleman hands us a letter which he draws out of his inner pocket.

Before we read, we bow, too, bidding the guests be comfortable. We do not wish to tear the envelope open, that would not be good taste. We inquire after the state of the weather, the condition of their health, and incidentally we take careful observation of the pair. The gentleman as mentioned is blond, inclined a bit to be corpulent. He has a fine, frank, humorous face, exceptionally kindly in manner, with tender eyes, small mouth, strong chin.

Finally we read the letter. Our Hamburg friends present the greatest violinist in the world (in their opinion), and the great harpist, his wife. Our friends beseech us to treat these geniuses in gentle spirit and to aid them on behalf of art.

We now effusively greet our visitors and shake their hands.

"Louis Spohr, the celebrated violinist and composer, and his wife, the well-known harpist! Well, this is a great pleasure. You have come to town for a visit? You plan to give some concerts—well, how perfectly wonderful. Have you made your arrangements for living quarters? Not yet?

Well, then, you must stay here. At least for a little while. We'd be honored to have you as our guests. No trouble at all."

There is much formal declining. Our visitors couldn't impose on us, they really feel as if they would rather pay for rooms at the Inn. They are noisy, they practice so much. . . . We insist again, there is considerable persuasion. They agree to stay; well, just a few days.

We are very good, they say. "We called at Baron Menage first. He was most discourteous. He scarcely rose from his seat. He read the letter and said, 'Ah, so you are Spohr the violinist and it says here you know your business. Good I don't understand music, this is my music'; whereupon he smacked the coins in his pocket, meaning, I suppose that he's money crazy. Then he nodded at us as if to say, be off, though he added, 'Come and visit me at my country place!' without saying where!"

"Thus in one hour," comments Mistress Spohr, "we meet the nicest and the meanest people in Paris."

The gentleman says "We have half a dozen letters. We came to town only an hour or so ago."

"So you will stay? . . . Fine," we declare with sincerity.

The men-servants take from the carriage the little luggage, consisting of a violin case, a harp and some few bags.

"We will put you up in this room, if it pleases you," we say, leading the way to our guest chamber.

"Oh, how pretty," cries Mistress Spohr, the husband adding, "What a lovely garden we see from this window."

We ask the visitors to make themselves comfortable and entirely at home.

"So we are settled, and ready for another attack," smiles the tall musician. "Dorette, my dear, if the kind friends will not object, we had best practice a little. Not a moment on the road to touch a string. We must also try to lay out a campaign. Get your wits working, Dorette.

"We have to see Cherubini, who, if our information is correct, is the master and the dictator of the French music. We must win him over if we can. I am told he is absolutely essential to success. . . . It is too bad he is not young and gallant as the king in Munich, my dear, or you could take care of him with a smile."

"You are always the same," says Mistress Spohr, "you never will forget that. Just because he was a king was no reason why he could not be a gentleman, and give me his seat. How could I play at the harp without a seat?" "How, indeed?" quietly responded Spohr, with a broad wink, "but it wasn't the chair that bothered me. It was his way of kissing you."

Spohr had taken out his violin and was already caressingly playing his instrument. So we left them.

"You do not mind the practice," he called over the banisters to us.

"No, indeed," we cry. "It'll be a pleasure to hear you."

"You don't want me to play softly?" he inquired.

"No, the more we hear the better," we answered him.

"You are not like the Duchess of Brunswick," he laughed mysteriously. Later when he came downstairs to supper, we asked him what he meant when he said we were not like the Duchess.

"Well, you see, the Duchess played cards, and our music disturbed her. Of course, she tolerated the concerts to a certain extent, we laid heavy rugs on the floor to deaden the sound, though we were permitted only to play very softly. But think of playing double fortissimo passages in a whisper. One time in the middle of a passage, a courtier roughly pulled at my arm to say the Duchess was annoyed—I was too loud. I was the leader of the orchestra and one day in a fit of desperation, I took up the rugs and directed the entire concert full pitch. It completely routed the Duchess' game."

"And a pretty way," says Mistress Spohr, "to repay the Duke, that was to be sure. Annoying his wife, the Duchess! If it hadn't been for him, you might never have been anybody."

"Well, I would surely have been born anyway, and in that case I would have performed somehow," playfully argued the husband.

"Yet it did count," his wife insisted.

"It was an inspiration."

"What was?" we ask.

"The way I came to the Duke."

"Do tell me about it."

"You don't need to ask him, my dears, my beloved husband always tells that story wherever he goes. And a good story it is," she explains.

"And a true story," he adds.

"You see, I was born in Brunswick." Spohr begins expressively. "My father was medical councilor and was positive his son would succeed him in the same capacity. But the prophecy of his son's vocation to be was twice augered, in the fact that father played the flute and mother played the piano and had a good voice. Indeed, when I was five, I sang soprano to my mother's alto. I wonder what would happen if I tried to repeat my soprano singing now?" the musician asks, making his voice a still deeper bass and turning to his listeners humorously. "One day we went to a country fair, and father bought me a violin. From that moment forth I was forever lost to medicine. A poor violinist came to town, just as we come to you——"

"Oh, sir, how can you say that?" we laugh.

Spohr continues in an endless flow of words:

"Well, anyway, he was looking for an opportunity to live. That musician was starving. My father took him in as helper. Every spare minute he had he fiddled. It was really very bad but as I listened to him, I cried for joy. I thought it was the greatest music in the world, and persuaded him

to teach me. I learned quickly arpeggios, running up and down the little violin like a runaway horse. I'd arpeggio in the bedroom, in the garden, and I'd arpeggio right into the kitchen where mother was cooking supper. 'Here, you little jackanapes, how do you expect me to season the soup?' 'The arpeggios'll help you?' I meekly suggested with a grin. 'I'll arpeggio you,' she said, pretending to hit me, with the saucepan, and away I'd run only to come back with some more to my mother's delight."

"And what's all that to do with your going to the Duke, pray?" asks Mistress Spohr.

"All explanatory, my dear; how can I explain the Duke unless I lead up to him?"

"Quite right, quite right," his wife answers pretending to be thoroughly resigned, and smiling at us, who thoroughly enjoy the repartee and voluble speeches. "Go on."

"So went on my musical tutelage." Spohr begins taking a deep breath. "When I did so nicely my father was won over to my making a musical career. But both father's father and mother's father were shocked, being clergymen both, believing that musicians were confined to tavern fiddlers and dancers. It's from my grandfathers I get my ecclesiastical bearing, hm h'm. . . . Yes, bearing.

"The poor fiddler soon said I knew more than he, so I studied with other local teachers, and started to write my own music. Father let me work in his place. Whenever I scratched out notes he said,

'Making windows again?' for he so designated the crosslines. By that remark he caused me to be neater.

"He became very much interested in my progress and promised me a new suit when my own first music should be played. The day arrived. It was a great day and for my composition, I was given a gala dress, consisting of a red jacket with steel buttons, yellow breeches, and laced boots—laced boots, with tassels. I wonder how I'd look in that costume now!"

"But, the Duke, the Duke!" urges his wife.

"Presently, presently, do not hurry me."

"But, my dear Louis, you started to tell our hosts about the Duke when we started supper and here we are past the third course, and nobody else has had a word to say."

"Oh, it's very, very interesting," we declare, "please don't hurry."

"Shall I go on?" Spohr asks, and then nods to his spouse as if to say, "You see, they are satisfied."

"So that was my own first music, it was a duet," he proceeds, as he munches his food. "I also wrote an opera at twelve. . . . At least I elaborately designed the title page (ever since I've painted for recreation), wrote the overture and opening chorus and then was lost. But it was an opera I started. . . . Now, I approach the matter of the Duke."

"He must go all the way to Hamburg to do it," his wife winks.

"To Hamburg is right. For I set out to make

my mark at fourteen. Father was sure I was the greatest artist in the world, so I boarded a coach and went to Hamburg with letters of introduction and my violin. But one man, one visit convinced me I hadn't a chance. The big city frightened me, and my first gentleman told me I was no good, so I returned crestfallen, walking. Defeated, I must tell my people I was defeated. That hurt—and I was afraid. . . . Then I had an inspiration. There came the thought of the Duke of my own city, Brunswick."

"Husband of the Duchess," mischievously winked his wife, as an interjection.

"I knew he walked each morning in the Palace garden. So I approached him and asked for his aid to study further. He laughed and arranged an appointment.

"At the palace next day I was very proud and told the doorkeeper I *had an appointment!* The Duke heard me and gave me a place in his orchestra.

. . . He loved music, played violin very nicely himself, but the Duchess, she hated it.

"After a while, he got to know me well, and he liked me, and paid for my study. 'What teacher will you have?' Instantly I said, Victti, and off to London I was bundled, but Viotti had gone into the wine business, for the English like wine better than music. I had difficulty getting a teacher but finally I made an arrangement with Eck, who taught

me and permitted me to travel with him. We went all the way to Petersburg.

"And nice goings on, you had," said the wife, pretending to be angry.

"Every stop I fell in love with a different girl."

"Silly fellow."

"Every one was a deep passion. I was so susceptible. I was so susceptible all the time. There was a Rosa——"

"Louis," said Mistress Spohr, sharply, "Louis, be careful."

"Rosa was very anxious to marry me. But I was waiting for Dorette, my wife."

"Very well turned, Louis."

"Yes, not like the ladies of Erfurt. They are all curves. Oh, my hoity toity, I made my wife jealous. . . . In Erfurt we were giving a concert. It was very warm in the hall and several wise gentlemen decided to open a trap door. It hadn't been touched in years. It broke with a jar, covering audience and artists in dirt. . . . It was in Erfurt that I nearly lost my finger. See it. This mark. I was carving some meat, the knife slipped and for days I cried because I felt my life and art were ended. . . . There was to be a congress of the European Princes at Erfurt, Napoleon acting as host. A big theater party. Oh, how I wanted to go to see the makers of the earth. But ordinary mortals weren't permitted to go in, only royalty. I figured a way, I induced the horn player to let me take his place

in the orchestra. But I couldn't play horn! Hence, I practiced all day, my lips getting worse and worse. But I managed to make the tone sound legitimate. Then to my dismay I learned the orchestra wasn't permitted to gaze on the elect. Any one seen turning around would be thrown in prison. I fixed that. I put a mirror on my music stand and I stared at Napoleon all I liked. My poor lips were all swollen and when I came home I told my wife it was from kissing the pretty ladies of Erfurt. I've always been very nice with the ladies. Why, when I was studying with the Brunswick teachers, I used to pass by a mill. The miller's wife called me in, I would play violin for her and she would kiss me and give me apples."

"Nice carryings-on, indeed, but are you still going to talk, for here we are to the dessert."

"Presently, presently, my dear, I will be through."

"Meantime, I was writing considerably and doing very nicely. I met in my travels a man who knew my father. He asked me why I had given up a real profession like medicine for music. 'Why, sir,' I said hotly. 'As high as the soul is above the body, so high is he who devotes himself to the ennobling of the mind above the man who attends to the mortal frame.'

"At one town I was given a lovely violin and at the next we were held up and music and violin were stolen from us. The music I found strewn on the road—they had no respect for my genius as a com-

poser. Another time, as I was calling on a lady, I rode a horse, which threw me and bruised my face so that I couldn't play violin or see her for a week."

"Good for you, for calling on her," said his wife.

"Then I met my wife. She was and is a very splendid harpist. We were introduced and we played together. One occasion we seemed to do especially well. That night as we were driving home——"

"Oh, Louis, you wouldn't dare to tell *that* story."

"Dorette, I *am telling* it. . . . As we were riding home, I turned to Dorette, and I said, 'If we could only play like that throughout our lives!' Dorette fell into my arms weeping. 'Take me, darling.' "

"Oh, Louis, you exaggerate so," Dorette, in scarlet countenance, remonstrated.

"That's all right, Dorette. You loved me and I love you. . . . When we started to furnish our house we had very little money. But luck brought me a rich clothing merchant who said he would buy any original scores of mine at a good price. He wanted to get into art circles, but he couldn't do anything himself. With my scores he'd have an entry. So I gave him scores, and he bought our furnishings!

"Later Dorette and I toured with much success everywhere through Europe, Paris—and here we are.

"Finally I came back home, to Brunswick, a full blown virtuoso, and the Duke welcomed me to his arms and made me the director of his orchestra."

"So, as I said before," remarks his wife, "that was a nice way to repay the Duke, to annoy the Duchess with your playing."

"I realize now the grave error of my ways," Spohr pleads with mock-seriousness, as he arises from the table and follows us into the parlor.

"Ah, I see, you play chess," he notes with satisfaction.

"Do you, Mr. Spohr?"

"Do I? Well, once I chessed myself into several successful concerts. It was this way. I called to see the Privy Councilor who was playing chess under a tree, with the Prince's daughter. She was losing badly and had just one move left, which she made, and lost the game. 'Permit me,' said I, 'to show you how you could have won.' 'It's impossible in that situation to win. There's no move possible,' said the Privy Councilor with firmness. 'May I show you?' I politely insisted. 'Certainly,' he said. 'Well, then do this and then this,' and sure enough the Princess did win. That pleased the Councilor. It gave me a fine opportunity to make friends with him and to chess myself into many fine concerts!"

At this moment, the door bell is rung and several guests arrive.

"Just the very people we want you to meet," we tell Spohr.

"Is that so?" he asks. "Who are they?"

"They are very musical people and support all good concerts——"

"Maybe it might be well to play something for them," he whispers to us.

"Just the thing," we assure him.

"This is Mr. Kreutzer, a noted violinist of our city; this is Ludwig Spohr, late of Cassell."

"I have heard of Mr. Spohr, in fact I have played his concertos," Kreutzer informs us. Spohr bows deeply, and offers to play something for Kreutzer and the others. He says that he will play one of his own concertos.

"Paganini says it's the greatest violin composition," Mrs. Spohr comments.

The violinist rigidly holds himself erect and still, and bows firmly and with full, round tone.

"Bravo," commends Kreutzer, "what fine style! How different from Sivori. Sivori plays with bravado, shaking all over, indulging in all sorts of gesticulations, facial expressions, and contortions."

"All wrong," declares Spohr, "for violin playing there must be quiet, repose, seriousness, classic manner."

"The Italians say my husband is the first singer on the violin," Mrs. Spohr says proudly.

"Cherubini must meet you very soon," Kreutzer suggests.

"Just the man we want to know," adds Spohr.

"Well, now, it is very easily arranged. He will be glad to have you come over to the Conservatory. We'll all go over, and we can discuss together the

matter of a concert, very quickly. Cherubini will support you and that's everything."

We are now pretending you know that we are one of the first families in Paris in 1820.

But this is a true story of how Spohr made his appearances in the different cities. I wonder how Heifetz, Elman, Kubelik, and Kreisler would like to go through such a process in these days of their ascendancy?

Important works of Spohr are: his great Violin School; Quartettes, quintettes, concertos, symphonies, "The Seasons," "Power of Sound," many hymns, masses, part songs. He will always be part of the violinist's repertoire.

Books about the composer: Biographies by Schlettner and Malibran. Growest in "Great Tone Poets" has an excellent chapter on Spohr. The composer has written a very amusing autobiography, the best work extant on his life.

XX

FACE TO FACE WITH PURCELL

1658-1695

KING CHARLES the Second of England, followed by his courtiers and favorites, had left the Chapel Royal, where his musician-in-ordinary, Henry Purcell, had performed some divers pieces of music, anthems, chorales, and odes on the organ for the edification and entertainment of the regal audience. The king had been pleased, so had the courtiers, and the fortunate commoners who had been admitted. Hence so was Henry Purcell, the organist, and composer of these same numbers, heard for the first time by the royal ears to whom they had been humbly dedicated and addressed. The King had sent for Purcell twice during the performance to commend him, and once had deigned to ask for the repetition of an entire movement. As his Majesty made his exit, Purcell bowed to him from his console and then being left alone, sat in a reverie.

"My dear Harry" came Percy, his dearest friend,

entering the loft. "A marvelous success it has been; I watched his Majesty, and he smiled continually in pleasure; and there came over his face occasionally a look of extreme grief whenever you gave your music a strain of sadness. Everybody concedes your position with the king is secure."

"His Majesty is a lover of music," said Henry Purcell. "He believes in the widespread knowledge of it. He is a good King of England, in that he nurtures the arts and by his presence encourages such poor wretches as I to tempt the muse. It is good to have a king like Charles after the Puritanism and narrowness of Cromwell. Why, it's no wonder after the barren years of his Protectorate we're the backward musical nation all the world knows England to be."

"Better to say that Cromwell's existence was good, my dear Harry," the friend retorted, "for without him you would never have been the musician you are. It was the swinging of the pendulum away from beauty that made people so eager for it. When the good Samuel Pepys was able to write with fiery enthusiasm after a period of years of no real music: 'This day the organs did begin to play at Whitehall before the king,' he expressed a great reaction, a grand burst of pent-up feelings. If Cromwell had never been, Harry, people would not have been so eager to hear your songs; you would have been only a musician of talent and nothing else. I am not lessening your credit, Harry dear. Lord! I know

how popular you are and God be praised, deservedly so. But I'm only observing the conditions which brought you to the position at such an early age of Master of Musique."

"Perhaps you are right, Percy, but then at best in England here, music is only in its nonage. 'Tis now learning Italian which is its master, and studying a little of French for the breeziness of that land, now it is coming for an understanding of English. Why, when I think of how little we know music I could cry for shame. We must go to other lands for our understanding. We know so little here. And what a pity. . . . Music is the exaltation of poetry, the two of them excellent when joined. Music is so essential to life. For me it is life. . . . Percy, I don't know why you started me on this discussion. But it's closest to my heart. I have such dreams, but there is much to vex me. Yes. I have studied the music of Lully and Corelli, the former for his operas and the latter for his instrumentation. It was Humphrey and the beloved Dr. Blow who gave me my grounding. My father was my first teacher. Ugh! When I came to realize how little my own father knew about the thing he lived by, I wonder at him, and how any one could be so lazy and indifferent. Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and master of the choristers of Westminster Abbey, he had only the simplest grounding in melody—not harmony. He delighted to wear his four yards of scarlet cloth wrapped about his shapely figure and

strut down the aisle singing and thwacking the choir boys."

"A friendly picture of one's pater," commented Percy.

"But he was good to me, all such happy-go-luckers are that way; the dear soul. Death entered, father left us without a penny, mother and the rest of us, when I was a mere child. But my Uncle Thomas, almost more than a father, was my real friend. He always called me son! He was a fine musician; he knew what we needed. He urged me to study, write, play. I was entered as one of the choir boys in the Chapel Royal, with my master as Chaplain Cooke. When the Chaplain died, along came dear Humphrey, and later I was taken over by Dr. John Blow, God rest his soul. He had me appointed keeper of the reeds and virginals and later as copyist of music to the Court. I'm indebted to Dr. Blow for my organ playing—he was a great artist. . . .

"You remember that little song "Sweet Tyranness" you liked so much the other night? Well, that I wrote when I was eight."

"Eighteen did you say, Harry?" Percy questioned teasingly.

The tall, slender Henry Purcell rose and shook his head as if to indicate that the fellow was incorrigible. There came over his face, long, oval, almost feminine in its waxy whiteness and chiseled features, a mysterious smile. A softness in the flesh, a slight tendency to flabbiness and puffiness, gave

the impression of indecision, lack of will, something unmasculine. Very voluptuous lips, swimming eyes, delicate chin and neck, high pitched and modulated voice, were characteristics one might not overlook. With his long, artistic fingers he smoothed out his curly wig, which rested on his shoulders with the embroidered collar that served to frame this delicate face.

"Well, my dear Harry, for that youthful indiscretion and for your exploits to-day, come along with me, and we'll celebrate," Percy suggested, offering his arm to the musician.

"Can't." Purcell was very firm. Percy laughed. Purcell went on, his lips tightened. "Much as I'd like to. My wife won't let me. Oh, yes, you laugh. She won't. She'll lock me out, if I come late. She has given absolute instructions to the servants to keep me out, if I come home later than midnight. She's right—I'm not blaming her, you know. She knows what I'm doing. She realizes I need rest, that it's bad for my health. She said she'll teach me a lesson. And I don't dare to take a chance again."

"Oh, oh, oh!" laughed his friend. "Come along, I'll stand by you. I'll tell her that I was with you. She knows me—I can win her over easily. We won't touch a drop—just talk. Not for long—come on, don't be tied to your wife's apron strings. Besides, you'll get home before midnight. It's only ten now. Sure, come on."

It was ever thus, the good friend and the weak

fellow, and the wife at home, even in old England and new.

"Oh, really, Percy, if you insist, but only for a little while. But first I want to run over the music for St. Cecilia's day, next week. And I ought to rehearse. It'll take me about half an hour. Listen, if you don't mind."

"I don't mind. But don't blame me if we're late," Percy answered.

Harry Purcell smiled and resumed his seat at the keyboard.

Then there rose out of the organ's depths a volume of sound which seemed to conjure up all the instruments of the orchestra, all the voices of the chorus, the whole world of speech and action. Swell and lull, ebb and flow, loud and soft, like the ocean rushing up and back at the beach. Like the breathing of a child. Like the undulations of a hilly country, with valleys deep and purply colored. Soft whispers of children gave place to loud thunderous echoes reverberating down the mountainous passes. One little man at a little box, and all around him great universes speaking. Great is the organ, earliest of instruments, medium for the dawning composers, sobbing and laughing down in myriad throats of metal, wood, and fiber. Bells clang, flutes pipe, violins throb, voices of the choir croon and moan, drums beat; sometimes full and pure-throated, and sometimes agitated and tremulous.

A fragrance of early spring violets is exhaled from

the music. It has in its phrases a delicacy and ingenuous simplicity, a verve of smiling poesy. It is not what might be termed juvenile, for its manner and technique are finished. It is rather early morning naïvete. Dew is still on the petals, the sun is barely arisen, a misty suggestion of the night lingers, birds twitter in pleasant abandon.

Such is Purcell's music. Innocent, naïve, beyond measure.

"You never played so well, Harry," the lone listener applauded.

"You didn't hear me play for Father Smith, did you? Well, that I guess was the most exciting organ music in the history of the world. Father Smith and Renatus Harris were two rival organ builders. Each desired to prove his instrument the better one. Harris brought over Lully and had him play for a concert. Point one for Harris—that was prestige. Smith engaged me—that gave him some extra standing. Harris engaged a half dozen others. Then came the grand climax, the contest itself. I worked. No laborer using his hands to break stone or erect monuments ever put more real physical effort into his work. Volume of sound was the one big idea, plus the best poetical interpretation possible, with the changing effects. Father Smith won, and so thoroughly did I hold the field, that I was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey."

Percy, realizing that time was flying, was getting restless by this time, so Purcell rose, drew his cape

over his shoulders, and the two walked out into the crisp night air. At once the musician coughed, a hacking, unhealthy sound.

"Wrap yourself up well," Percy advised.

"Or else," the composer added, "Purcell will soon be writing no more music for the boarding schools of young gentlewomen, as I was ordered to do at the beginning."

"Or doing no more popular songs for the crowds to sing, for the soldiers to march by. Oh, its 'lero, lero, lillibullero,' " screeched Percy, recalling Purcell's popular hit, perhaps the first ragtime song in history.

"Or writing welcome songs for royalty."

"Or doing funeral marches for queens."

"Or putting Shakespeare to music."

"Or doing music for the queen's expected maternity."

"Or building "Diocletian," or doing sometimes little vulgar catches."

"Or adding to thirty-five operas."

So the friends indulged in repartee as they marched along. Percy joined in again with: "Or being rebuked for collecting fees."

He had meant it as a bit of fun, but it hit Purcell hard.

"Percy, you know you're not fair. Every organist at Westminster had collected fees for the seats in the organ-gallery. It was part of their expected income. I did no more than the others, but with me

it was made a subject for public discussion. Yet you know as well as I that the minute I found out that people objected, I stopped it, and that was the end of it."

"Oh, my dear Harry, utterly devoid of a sense of humor; of course, I know. I know you're the finest friend that ever man had. Don't I know how much every musician loves you, and don't I know how much you did for Dryden? Everybody realized that you saved Dryden from arrest for debt a hundred times. My dear Harry, I didn't mean to offend you. There was never a human being as honest and sweet-souled as you. Harry, forgive me, please."

"I know—I'm too sensitive," and the two friends clasped hands again in midstreet to the amazement of passersby. Gay, old England street! The low-gabled houses, the occasional spires of churches, the queer horse carriages that rattled over the cobble-stones. The bewigged gentry, the ladies in great wide skirts, the street urchins and gamins, peeping at each passerby. Beggars. Old, gay England. With arms locked Purcell and his friend walked to the inn.

And the time went on, and midnight sounded, and went by, and still they talked and sang and told stories, and forgot entirely that Purcell was supposed to be at home. Until too late. Midnight!

"Now, don't worry, Harry," the younger fellow assured him, "your wife only did that to scare you —an empty, meaningless threat. Come on, I'll tell

her. I'll back you up. We did no harm. Lord! Hasn't a man a right to his own whims. Can't a man of your reputation decide his own affairs. Lord! I wouldn't be worried if it were going to be like that. But by the King's beard, it's all right."

So back through the pitch black night they go to the little house at Dean's Yard. Harry coughing and holding his chest, which is filling with the oppressive dark air of the early morning.

Knock, knock, knock, the men tap the doors, first gently, then louder and louder, crescendo and fortissimo. Bang, bang, bang! No response.

"My dear, let me in," Henry shouts.

"Mrs. Purcell, it is I, Percy Westmoreland, we have been detained by the King."

No response. A little child's voice cries, "Papa, there's Papa."

"It's the littlest boy," Harry says in a convulsion of coughing. But the child's voice is stilled as if forcibly.

The minutes rush by, a half hour has gone, soon the dawn breaks in the sky; the two men have given up the attack.

"Come to my house," Percy pleads. "God, I'm sorry. Come over and get under cover."

Purcell refuses. He'll see this vigil through. He insists it's his fault, not Percy's, not the wife's. It's a good lesson for him.

Percy has taken off his coat and wrapped it around Harry's throat, while he coughs and spits.

"The cat," hisses Percy.

"My wife is a dear woman," whispers Harry in a hoarse voice.

Daybreak—and the doors open; Harry falls into bed and never leaves the house again.

Next week St. Cecilia's music is played without the composer, and the funeral music for Queen Mary is repeated for Purcell . . . the last of England's real composers.

Important works of Purcell: Sacred music, twenty-nine odes, one hundred anthems, violin sonatas, "Timon of Athens," "Abdelazor," "Epsom Wells," "Dido and Æneas," Welcome Song for His Royal Highness, "Diocletian," "Orpheus Brittanicus," "Theatre of Music."

Books about the composer: Biographies by Streatfield, Cummings, Dole, Hogarth.

XXI

FACE TO FACE WITH THE SCARLATTIS

Alessandro, 1659–1725—Domenico, 1683–1757

ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI sat in his music room in Naples, boiling with rage. He held in his hand a much crumpled note which he had read many times. The old man, white-haired and white-skinned, wrinkled, haggard and care-worn, looked out of deep-set, piercing eyes at the walls. He had sent away his pupils. His music pen lay idle. Ever since the coming of the letter last night, everything had hung in abeyance. He could bring himself to no decisions. He had not slept all night. He had eaten nothing. The worry was gnawing out his heart.

No more composition to-day. No more work with this staring him in the face. That wretched son—how much more misery will he inflict?

Instead of bringing joy and some solace in the father's last years, he was proving the drain on his resources, dragging him to an early death. . . . Yes, this couldn't keep up. . . .

Domenico Giussepe Scarlatti was expected to arrive very soon. The note preceded him, broke the ice as it were, and gave notice of the purport of his visit. "Dear Father: I am coming to you again—for the last time—for help. I must call on you for assistance, or I die. It will never happen again. . . . I won't take up any of your time. I'll slip in between lessons at ten."

Ten! Now it was eleven. Nearly twelve.

"Even when he comes to beg of me for money, he does not keep his promise," the father murmured. "Late even now, when he wants to bleed me again."

With a gesture of disgust, the old gentleman walked to the window. He was stooping with age and hardship, his jacket vainly striving to fit him with that neatness he besought, but instead hanging from his figure as on a coat-tree. A lonely man, indeed, a single branch left standing alone in the forest. Down the quaint old Naples street Scarlatti sought the missing son. Finally he caught the glimpse of an advancing obstacle which slouched along the walls, ashamed but besot, fat and clumsy. In at the Scarlatti house the man turned and falteringly stumbled into the room.

For a moment or two both men looked at each other, the elder with face severe, pained, maddened; the younger with stupid, befogged, embarrassed vagueness. The elder stood there glaring hard at the other, his hands clasped behind his back, stand-

ing there like a priest of punishment. The younger was trying hard to be brave and confident, trying hard to assume some semblance of bravado, but one could tell he realized his disgrace. The silence was ominous. Domenico dropped his head and shifted from one foot to the other, trying to get away from his father's gaze that pinned him fast. Domenico was taller than Alessandro, a bloated, red-faced, weak-spined, and weak-mouthed individual, comparable to the elder man as a libertine to a cloistered celibate.

"For what have you come?" finally Alessandro asked in a low tone.

"Now listen, father, I can't make any excuses. I know you despise me. But I'm through now, if I can only get that much by to-morrow everything will be all right, and I'll never get myself into such a mess again." Domenico looking at the floor spurted it out in a breath as if he had rehearsed the speech and he felt he had to do it and had better get it over at once.

A pause and then the father said bitingly:

"Never again what?"

"Never, father; I swear it. I mean it now."

Domenico looked up pleadingly, his hands raised to give impress to his appeal.

Alessandro's lips went tight, his fists clenched, a finger raised threateningly.

"Just what you told me many times before. You mean it, I suppose now because you see what it's

going to do to you. I suppose you're in a fine mess. Lord knows what it is. But to-morrow will come and you'll be back at your old tricks."

Alessandro hesitated a moment. His lips trembled. His eyes grew moist. Then his tone of voice changed—a throb to it——

"Oh, Domenico, is this the great genius I pictured you? Is this the son I sent out with all my blessings and prayers, equipped with all the knowledge I could give him from my famed experience? When you were born I prayed for you. I spent hours teaching you all I knew, times when I was sick in bed I still kept at you. I gave you all I had, and then when I had reached the end of my abilities, I wanted you to be greater than I. I sent you to other masters in other cities. I sent you forth saying: 'Take this eagle, for his wings are too big to fly in this narrow confine.' Domenico, what are you doing to yourself? Your wings are clipped. You cannot soar now."

Domenico listened and broke into sobs, falling huddled at the father's feet.

"Here you are forty-two years old. Because of my name you have been given every opportunity. You have held great positions of musical trust. You have lost every chance. Your music for the harpsichord has been heard, and you could write more great music, even operas, like I have. But you gamble and gamble; you sit at the table and play through the long nights. Every bit of money you have made

you spend with loafers, rowdies, criminals, do-nothings. Women, bad women, have been able to twist you around their fingers. You have no will power. Those people you know—they have robbed you, lowered you, stolen your ideals, made you this drunken lout.

"A lovely wife you have, so pretty, so sweet, such a prize; a fine young boy, he is eighteen. He has my genius, too. Wife and boy forgotten; left to starve in destitute poverty. You know how often they have come to me. 'Father, grandpa, give us to eat; papa is not home; he has not given money for many weeks? What shall we do?' You gave them no thought. Where were your thoughts. . . . Mm. . . . Mm. Now, what do you need?"

Domenico raised himself from the floor. His face was tear-stained and genuine contrition was written all over it.

"Father, I'm a wretch. I don't deserve to be even admitted to your house. I know, I—I—I wish I could just go away and not fasten this trouble on you. If I only knew some way I could get it, without bothering you——"

"Never mind," Alessandro interrupted. "How much do you need?"

"I need 200 crowns. It will pay my debt and leave me free forever. I'll have no more shackles. I know what a wretch I have been. I know how I have torn at your heart. I know how I left my beloved ones at home; how I have forsaken my

music. I'm miserable. I'm heartbroken. I'm only now beginning to see. Something before blinded me. Now I know. Father, help me, but mainly forgive me. That's the main thing. Forgive me. I want your love. That's the principal thing in my life—your love. It's been everything. It is you who made me a composer, who gave me every chance in the world.

"I admire you so much. If I didn't even have any relation to you, I'd worship you. When I think of all your sufferings, of all your struggles, of your marvelous success, you, the pioneer, the maker of art, the father of classical music. I've often sat back and wondered what history would write of you. . . . You arose from out of no music and created great music. You, the little Alessandro born in the fortress at Trapani, Sicily, you had real manhood and real music. You made opera. All opera will date its greatest strides from you. Think of the accepted ideas in opera that you invented. The arias, the way that a singer was enabled to show her vocal technique and her art, the use of themes occurring and recurring. Oh, I have bragged about my father to all the musicians I have met. 'Yes, I am proud of my father. Why shouldn't I be. He's the greatest man of the time.' Yes, misunderstood even if you are now, the world will remember its debts to you and recount your marvelous gifts to music. You yourself could perform on harp and harpsichord and violin, how sweetly you could sing; not only writing

the words and music, but singing, playing or conducting the score. I brag about you everyhere. I am making the musicians of all the countries know you for what you are. You conducted your own operas for the first time. You created the symphony. You taught musicians how to think broad ideas. You were full of passion for work. Nights when I wasted my energy and mind, you were writing beautiful cantatas. Father, I know of that time when in a month of thirty days you wrote thirty-five beautiful cantatas. Oh great, great father; I love you.

"If you should to-day turn me out without a ducat I could still love you for all you are and all you have done for the world.

"Don't think, father dear, I am ungrateful. Don't think I don't know how you must struggle for a living, even after you have written your thousands of operas, masses, cantatas, songs, solos. I'm a wretch, but I love you. Please love me."

Now it was the old man's time to cry. With a sob he rushed to the penitent and drew Domenico to his arms, while both wept and moaned.

"Ah, my Domenico," said Alessandro, through his tears. "You are my flesh and blood, bigger and lovelier than any opera I wrote. You are everything to me, despite your errors. I cannot turn you away. The money is yours—never mind how I will get it."

"Oh, thank you; thank you. father, I am going on

a different road from now on. I'll never sin again. . . . It's so good to be your son again, like the olden times. Let us sit down near each other. Let me take your hand. Ah, that's better. . . . And now, I will tell you some good news. You have heard of the Irishman, Roseingrave. He traveled over to Naples to meet me. He said what I had written seemed so wonderful to him he wished to know all about it, and he would spread the work abroad through Ireland, England, France, everywhere. He said the music I was doing for the pianoforte was sure to live—much bigger than works even of the famous François Couperin. He said that future composers would simply build on my foundations, that I had devised the possibilities of the new pianoforte.[1]

"Oh, success is coming to me—I'm not altogether a failure. Aren't you glad? What do you think?"

Instantly a new light of happiness had taken possession of the two men. Forgotten days when they lived together, always together, father and son, were remembered, and now it seemed as if no trouble had ever arisen. Alessandro, always both mother and father to the youth, had loved Domenico as only a very great soul can do. Antonio Anzilove had died

[1] As a matter of fact, the poet of the pianoforte who was born a century later, Frederick Chopin, did build on Scarlatti. Couperin's music to-day sounds antiquated but Scarlatti's is still fresh and interesting. Indeed, one is inclined to say that Domenico Scarlatti and Frederick Chopin are the two biggest figures in the history of the pianoforte.

when Domenico was a boy, and Alessandro had been always with Domenico. That is why the separations were so hard, why the bond was so deep.

"Play something for me, boy," laughingly commanded the father.

"I am getting so fat, I can no longer cross my hands at the harpsichord—the trick that made so many envious."

But he played something of his own, and the father listened, amazed, delighted.

"Bravo, Domenico; you are wonderful. That is great music. It's so original, so masterful. Well, I'm glad, I'm not envious, I'm not jealous. This pleases me more than if I had done it. . . . Well, I guess I can say it, and I will: you are bigger than I have ever been. You are the greatest player of harpsichord I ever heard. You have no competitors, I know. How do you do it, though—when do you practice. As I have also heard, you have made this new pianoforte a thing of tremendous beauty. And they speak of Händel. Pooh. Who is Händel in comparison with you?"

"Händel, father, the composer of composers," and Domenico reverently crossed himself. "You cannot imagine his powers. He is in his way as mighty as you, my father, and you know how great a compliment that is from me. Once I thought Händel was nothing to me. You remember the contest at Ottoboni's. Oh, such excitement. The Cardinal Ottoboni knew that there was fierce rivalry between us. I

came out victor on the harpsichord, but at the organ I was miserably beaten. Father, you never heard such music. And as composer, as writer of oratorios and operas! Don't think of him as a poor musician. I am the idolator of Händel." And again he crossed himself.

The elder man laughed.

"You have been a great follower of many strange people. You have put yourself on record as commending the extraordinary contraption of Cristofori, who changed the harpischord into a piano. Instead of plucking the strings, to hit them with a hammer! Strange, indeed. To my mind, unmusical, maybe I'm old fashioned, but I can't see that is good."

"Ah, but, father, you must hear one of the pianos. You can do things with it you could never do with the harpsichord. You can sustain the tones as on a violin, almost. Really, father, I mean it. You must hear the piano. In time to come I believe there will be no such thing as a harpsichord; the piano will take its place, and this strange contraption of Cristofori will be in every home some day, you'll see. I will show you what wonderful things you can do with it you never could do at the harpsichord."

"Well, maybe, Domenico, but I still prefer the harpsichord. But, how of your composition? Writing no more fugues inspired by the cat walking over the keyboard, I hope?"

"Nothing more like it, but it was nice. It gives one a chance to imitate the movement of the cat's

paws. Something else, father. My dear patron, Princess Magdeline, has liked my compositions very well. I am in disgrace with her now, father, but I know that when I clean up my debts everything will change for the better.

"Great Father Scarlatti: I am already on the better road. I feel like a new man. You have saved me as you brought me into life and gave me all I possess. I shall write wonderful music for the new pianoforte. I will make you proud of me. I will make money now and insist on your retiring, no more work for you. You ought to rest—I will see to it. I am made over. I will try to follow your pure example by avoiding all the pitfalls of crime and indulgence. I am going home for a new life. I've taken so much of your time, I hope you won't mind."

"Here, my son, you've forgotten the money. Wait a minute while I get it for you. . . . Here it is. My blessings with it, Domenico."

The son took the gold and kissed his father.

"Good-by for a little while, great Father Scarlatti."

"Good-by, great son of mine. You are really and instinctively a good boy; keep away from the bad influences, and only think of your ideal."

Alessandro returned to his desk. He was peaceful in soul and mind. He was happy. He shook his head emphatically with smiles wreathing his brow.

"Great boy, great son," he murmured. "I'm glad

we're reconciled again. I was too hard on him. I must not scold him so much. Now I can work. I'll go on writing."

Domenico walked out of the house and up the street with a new air, hurrying fast away to his ideal. And Domenico, reaching a crossing some blocks away, was met by a quartet of gentlemen, who chided him for being so long.

"The table's getting cold. . . . How much have you got?"

"Two hundred and twenty crowns. My, it was a tough one this time. Had some hard job, believe me. The old fellow's getting harder and harder. I must win tonight. If I lose, I'm through. He'll never help me again. Well, on to the game."

Alessandro Scarlatti composed one hundred and fifteen operas, two hundred and twenty masses, four hundred serenatas, and hundreds of other compositions.

Domenico Scarlatti's piano works are easily obtainable, and are essential to every pianist's repertoire.

XXII

FACE TO FACE WITH TSCHAIKOVSKY

1840–1893

SOFRONOFF sleepily rubbed his eyes and stepped out of bed. It was nearly seven and the master of the house always wished his tea at seven . . . at seven-fifteen at the latest. Sofronoff pulled on his blouse, trousers and boots, and struck a match to the wall-light and under the samovar. It was a rainy, dismal day in late October. The pelting downpour came from a sky as iron-gray as a battleship. Out on the lawn, everything was in a blur, with a misty exhalation rising from the earth. The wagon passing, behind dripping, drenched horses seemed to move like a rat, half-drowned. The house felt cold, the gas lights gave an imperfect illumination in the half-darkness of the morning fog. Everything was moist and sticky to the touch. . . . Sofronoff rubbed his hands. With the teapot on the tray, he moved through the hall to the master's chamber. A chill went up and

down his spine, as the draught of the hall cut to the marrow of his bones.

Tschaikovsky was still in bed. Generally, Sofronoff found him dressed, waiting for his breakfast. He set down the tray, and picked some of the clothes from the floor. Tschaikovsky opened his eyes. They were blood-shot and heavy. His pointed beard was in disarray, the mustache mussed and his white hair standing in tufts pointing in all directions. His face was troubled and grief-marked.

"Good morning, your honor," Sofronoff murmured.

"Mm . . . Uh, a bad night, leave it, leave it. . . . That's all right——"

"Will you have some toast? What book will you read, something about Mozart? Are you going to walk? Or is it work——?"

"Ah, Sofronoff, do not talk. . . . Uh, leave, uh, leave me. Go, I—I do not want to hear you."

The servant hesitated, attempted to say something, then shaking his head, went out of room. . . . Minutes passed, still Tschaikovsky remained in bed, looking into space. Ugh, the chill of the room, the dank moisture of the air, the half-darkness, worse than midnight black. The heavy pain in the back of the head, the dull sensation in the eyes. . . . Should he get up—for what? To come in waking contact with the melancholy thought. Stay in bed —and remain inactive? A dozen times in a *quasi*-dream, he saw himself, getting out, putting on some

clothes, bathing his face and arms, going into work. But still he lay there. . . . The door opened . . . Sofronoff again.

"You haven't touched the tea, your honor, it is cold. I'll warm it."

"No, leave it. Don't bother me, Sofronoff. . . . But wait. I don't know what's going to happen to me to-day. Look in when I don't see you. Don't bother me with food, no. . . . But, Sofronoff, I can't be left to-night. I'll—I'll try to work to-day. You know I can't dare to work at night—the visions you know, since years ago, with 'Winter Dreams'. . . . To-night—I must not be left to think. Last night. Oh . . . Sofronoff, bring neighbors, arrange something here, to keep my mind . . . occupied. . . . Go, Sofronoff. Take the tray. No, wait, I'll just take a sip. . . . My throat, parched, oh. . . . So. Go, Sofronoff."

He was out of bed now. He slipped a dressing gown about him, and in his slippers, moved toward the window. Outside dismal, chill; inside the house and inside the heart.

He walked from the bedroom to the study-chamber. The piano was piled up with music and manuscript paper. At the desk was the half-finished bit of the "Moment Lyrico." It was an easy thing to write, when one was in the mood. But the mood? Tschaikovsky sat down at the desk, picked his pen and dipped it into the ink, and waited for the note to come. . . .

His hand poised, he drifted off into a *quasi*-dream state. He could see the house at Votkinsk again, the big, massive old place where he had been a boy, he could see his father in uniform, with the epaulettes on his shoulders, the brass buttons, and the men taking orders from him. And his mother, with the sad eyes, playing and singing morbid songs at the piano, in a little, throbbing voice. . . . Her slender, shapely hands. . . . In the house, an old, trembling, sighing aunt, too. There came one day a large musical box from St. Petersburg, which played fine music, and the best was an aria from Mozart's "Don Giovanni." Little Peter Illytsch Tschaikovsky loved to hear them all, but the music of Mozart he liked best. And he played what he liked by ear at the piano. Six years old he was and they decided to teach him music. He wanted it very much and when the old aunt said he was too young, he went into a room and cried, and they couldn't find him for hours.

The time they moved from Votkinsk to Moscow. His father had a chance for a wonderful appointment, but the friend with whom he had discussed it, had gone ahead and obtained the post. So, there —there they were. . . . And they were crying, he and his mother. And then they moved to St. Petersburg and Peter went to school. . . . Rules and regulations and scoldings. That mean teacher who was so cross . . . that night that Peter was sick and he shook all over and nearly died. The months at

home again, and finally the time he was put to law school. . . . His mother went to the institution with him, and when she said good-by—"Oh, don't go, mother, don't leave me. . . . Stay, take me, take me." They forced him back while she got into the carriage, and when the horse moved, Peter broke from those who held him, and tried to stop the wheels. The terrible law, the mathematics—hateful stuff. . . . One day he solved a problem in mathematics without any help, and he wrote home bragging. "Dear mother: Please tell everybody that to-day I found the solution of an arithmetic problem all by myself. . . . Isn't that great, dear mother. . . . Dear mother, sick, are you? Oh, mother. . . . Sick, dead are you . . . mother, mother!"

The composer jumped from the piano stool to his feet, the *quasi*-dream falling to bits. Oh, oh, he sighed, holding his hand to his forehead. Always the same, always the old sorrows. But hark, the calling of an old requiem. What is that? The requiem they played at his mother's grave. Slowly, mournfully it sounds. Tschaikovsky paced the floor. Sofronoff looked in: "Master, your honor, is there anything I——"

Tschaikovsky slammed the door. That requiem. What did it mean now? Oh—that? That! For a symphony? His sixth? A symphony pathetique, that's right. He snatched the manuscript of the "Moment Lyrico" and threw it to the other end of the piano.

"Symphony Number 6. Opus 74." The notes of the requiem. He wrote feverishly, madly, his face racked with the grief of his boyhood heart. His pen paused. He ceased for a moment and in that second he passed again into a state of half-somnolence. . . .

An office, the Ministry of Justice. He was an official now, having graduated from law school, he must needs work. At a desk, filling in documents, and going off into reveries, chewing the paper in his hand. There was a day he was commissioned to take an important paper, bearing the signature of the Minister of Justice, to another high official. He paused to converse with a friend and as he talked he chewed the paper; half of it, and he had to have a duplicate made out. They treated him badly down there. It was misery. . . . The only pleasure was nights, studying music, and going with fellow amateurs to concerts and operas. They knew Peter could improvise so they always had him invited to parties, to play the dance music . . . while the others danced. He, why, he was too bashful to get up and dance. That's what he was, bashful, afraid of women, liking them none too well. But for music—everything, everything. When Nicholas Tschaikovsky, his brother, objected to the way he was neglecting his career for music, he wrote, "I may not become another Glinka, but I promise you some day you will be proud to have me for a brother." Yes, on music, he was sure. But Rubinstein, Anton

Rubinstein, the great pianist, head of the Conservatory, tried his best to break that belief down, didn't he? Everything must be Anton Rubinstein's not Tschaikovsky's. When he finished his examination paper, his original "Storm," there was a storm. Laroche carried the manuscript to Rubinstein. Poor Laroche, it was good Peter himself had designated a messenger, for the Lion roared and called Tschaikovsky a worthless fool, crazy to go in music. Laroche, he gave a report much softened, softening Tschaikovsky's feelings. Later, Laroche, his schoolmate, become musical critic, did soften many attempts to kill the genius of Peter Illiytsch Tschaikovsky. Anton Rubinstein, such a pianist, a god, but such a tyrant. Even after the successes of Tschaikovsky, Anton continued to criticize his work as if he were a child. And Anton, a mere dabbler in composition beside Peter. Once, the audacity of him. He sent back a score: "Please change the oboe-part, it is too high for my player, he complains it hurts his lips." Change, change—as if anything Peter wrote could be changed without changing the sense of it! As though changing that part were not equivalent to changing the whole sense of the score. What a supreme insult—change the music to suit the oboe-player's lips! . . . But it was through the Rubinsteins that Peter had his start, subordinate in Nicholas Rubinstein's conservatory. Any kind of place in music was better than the law work. But just a subordinate, and always they treated him that

way. . . . They hated him. His opera was refused. The publishers lost it, too. And everything he tried was laughed at; but he knew it would come out. Then the time of the break with Nicholas Rubinstein . . . and independence and starvation if need be.

With independence came the growth of his name and his fame, came the need for his attendance at performances. He was to direct an opera. He went to the main entrance. He was wearing evening clothes, and that was torture to him. He looked very awkward and not well-dressed. Society was coming in its carriages and its fineries. The doorman said: "Your ticket." He tried to explain; he was the composer; the doorman was obdurate. "There won't be any performance." Finally the obstinate doorman gave way. Inside, the sight of the audience filled Tschaikovsky with fear. He wanted to run away. He felt he was a sham, that he had no ability, had no right to put on a work of his, doomed to failure. Faces everywhere seemed to be grimacing at him, as he walked out. He lifted the baton, it was lead. His head seemed hanging by a thread. He felt he ought to put down the stick and hold his head from falling off. He gave the wrong cues, beat all out of time. But the men knew the music, and didn't follow him at all. They dragged him out to bow. What a fool he made of himself that day. . . .

The composer came to himself with a start. He

was no further in his writing. For half an hour or more he tried to change his mood. There was a spray of violets on the mantel. He looked at it; the only smile he had indulged himself for days, came to his lips. Sofronoff had put it there. A violet. Just as in his music, a violet can command his attention in the midst of unconquerable grief, so he paused in his infinite woe to contemplate it. But from violet to other thoughts is but an easy step, from a violet to beauty and to love is but a moment's change of attitude.

What a day! What a mood! It is only suicide left. Suicide, pah. A dozen times he had tried it and given up. The sixth symphony started at the piano—maybe it would be his last, maybe it would be his suicide confession.

Now from out the vagueness of memory, troop the three other women of his life. There had been his mother whom he adored, and there had been Desirée Artot, and Antonina, and there had been and was and is Madame von Meck. . . . Desirée he had adored and wanted more than life; Antonina—Madame von Meck?

Desirée Artot! She was not exactly beautiful, but she was alluringly magnificent. A singer of the hour. She came to Petersburg, the leading woman in an opera company. She was the idol of the capitol. And bashful, almost feminine Peter Tschaikovsky won her love. Perhaps it was because he was so different from the rest, perhaps because she felt that

this was his only passion, and that it would be his last; some men like Tschaikovsky are like that, and deserve to be respected in their love. Perhaps one of a thousand things. Nevertheless, to his great joy, she loved him. . . . They were engaged to be married. But a ridiculous question arose, prompted by his friends. "Peter, you are young and striving for fame and fortune, she is a little older and famous and rich. You will be the husband of a great woman, that is all. And your own ambitions will be lost." He was fool enough to listen, and to discuss it with Desirée. She said: "I love you, but not enough to give up my career. You give up yours. No! Neither one of us give up. We will marry and be happy, each doing our work." But his friends bothered him. The lovers argued. Then he wrote to his father for advice, and the old man said: "Marry and be happy." . . . But when he went to see her again, after their quarrel, Desirée had left, and was married to another artist, who didn't mind. . . . How he had cried—oh, how bitterly!

Tschaikovsky was crying again. He sat at his piano stool, the tears streaming down his face, as he had done the night he heard her again at the opera-house. She sang divinely, she the wife of another. And the love of his life had gone out. . . . And then Antonina Ivanovna Niljukova.

Tschaikovsky put his hands over his eyes to shut out the vision of this sight which now came upon him again. . . . It would have been a farce, if it

had not been a tragedy, and the breaking point of his whole career.

He saw it all over again. He saw himself opening his mail one morning. A perfumed pink note stood out from the rest. He picked it up very curiously, opened it, and saw the name, that name.

He had known her as a younger man, had once flirted with her in a meaningless way. Now he was famous, his music was beloved by thousands. . . . This letter said so, this letter recalled the old acquaintance, and it said, "You would have gone further with me, if I had been not so distant then, Tschaikovsky. I have regretted my attitude ever since. I love you, Tschaikovsky. I give myself to you." It was a silly letter, like many others any public man receives from romantic women. He threw it aside. But later in the day he picked it up, and read it over, and in a fit of curiosity to see this girl again he answered her. . . . They met. She was beautiful. She came to see him. She threw herself at him, and still curious, though he felt no love for her, though he told her so—"I cannot love you, my dear, I can be your friend, but I cannot love you"—still she fell about his neck. There were complications; they corresponded, the letters were implicating; but most of all, the girl Antonina Ivanovna was going to kill herself, if he refused her plea. . . . It was a question of letting her die or marrying her. He thought that fate was directing him, fate always in his life. Oh, good God—he

married her. . . . One week and he fled, it was something terrible to live with a woman for whom he had no love, married in such a way, married and doomed to look upon a creature whom he hated. . . . He fled. His brother met him, and hysterically Peter fell into his arms, and remained in a torpor for nearly three days. Afterwards, he recovered, but he could not join the woman again. . . . She was not a bad woman, but he couldn't live with her.

Perhaps then he would have died. He wanted to commit suicide. But he couldn't awaken the courage to do it. He stood in the icy river hoping to catch pneumonia, but he wouldn't—couldn't plunge his head under the surface.

And then came the third woman, Madame von Meck.

At the thought of her, a different attitude came upon the despondent figure. He remembered again that woman, *whom he had never seen!* She had heard Tschaikovsky's music, had been infatuated with it, and learning of the composer's sore distress had very delicately and gracefully settled upon him a yearly income sufficient to enable him to live comfortably without need to worry over his returns on his composing. This woman, the widow of a wealthy engineer who had come up from poverty, had eleven children and her love for Tschaikovsky's music. The two had never met—it had been Madame's express desire that nothing personal

should enter to mar the joy of giving to art. . . . They never saw each other or heard the other's voice, and yet that dream world. They wrote to each other, and they knew each other by a million methods.

It had been Tschaikovsky's one love—that of Desirée Artot—but what was this fifteen-year affection of Madame and Peter Illiytsch to be called? He loved her, he loved her more truly and divinely than any man ever felt toward a woman—and she; well, he felt that she understood and lived with him in this dream world. He wrote her all the secrets of his heart, discussed his troubles and his ambitions. And she comforted him and encouraged him, and through the distances, sent her embraces to him. . . .

But now, he could not understand. For many days he had received no letter from her, from her who was always so faithful and constant. . . . More misery perhaps. But it could not be—that was one thing which could not happen, for Madame von Meck to forsake him.

A knock on the door.

"Who is it? Sofronoff. Come in, what is it?"

"Master, you have eaten no breakfast, no luncheon. It is not good for you. Your honor, please let me bring you some food."

"No, Sofronoff, I'm not hungry—did you arrange for the people to come to-night. If they do not come, I will not know what to do with myself. All day like this, no work, no peace, nothing but

torture—melancholia. . . . What's that in your hand, Sofronoff? A letter from Madame von Meck? Why did you not give it to me? Give it to me."

A moment only, he opened the envelope, read for a few words, then tore it in pieces, and swooned upon the floor.

"Your honor, your honor," sobbed Sofronoff, as he carried him to his bed, a limp lump of flesh, white and ghastly as a corpse.

Outside the rain pelted down, and the half-darkness of the room now turned to dusk and twilight.

* * * * *

The letter was his death. He finished his "Suicide or Pathetique Symphony." He never finished the "Moment Lyrico."

The important works of Tschaikowsky are: Symphonies, especially the "Pathetique," Overtures, especially the "1812," the operas, "Eugene Onegin," "Francesca da Rimini," "Manfred," "Romeo and Juliet," and "Hamlet," "Souvenir de Florence," "Souvenir de Hapsal," "The Seasons," "Fatum," "Vakula, the Smith," many songs, of which probably the best known is "Ye Who Have Yearned Alone."

Book about the composer: Read Nathan's "Biography of Tschaikowsky."

XXIII

FACE TO FACE WITH GARCIA [1]

1775–1832

"HOLD!"

From the blackness of the mountain road, a hoarse voice called out. The travelers looked at each other in surprise, and dropped into the bottom of the carriage.

"Hold! Or we fire!"

The driver pulled up his horses with a jerk, and jumped down, with his hands up. He was going to take no chance; he had evidently been through this before. Instantly half a dozen men sprang out of the bushes. Their eyes were covered with masks. In the hand of each, relentless, a gun was raised.

The door on either side of the coach was jerked open while into the carriage the guns were pointed.

"Come out or we shoot."

A man and two women crawled out from under

[1] The present study is to bring forth one of the pioneer opera innovators. The man who creates a place for music is, himself, a great man. But Garcia was more than that, as the story briefly tells.

the seats. The women were crying, the man was undaunted.

"Put your hands up and make no move, do you hear?"

The scene was at Tepeyagualo, in Mexico, about 1828. The party was the first division of the Garcia Grand Opera Troupe, returning from Mexico City to Europe. The man was Manuel Popolo Garcia, and the brigands did not belong to any stage setting —they were real. So were the gold and dollars which they quickly consigned to their open bags and carried off on fleet horses into the pitch-black night.

"Good-by, sweet singer. Thanks for your wonderful voice," the voices echoed back to the crestfallen artists. "Adios, adios."

"Good-by, Mexico, and all my work," Manuel Garcia sighed as he crept back into the coach and directed it to the nearest intelligence office.

The office was of the local justice. He met them at the door, dressed in his night cap, with a stick in his hand and the dignity of his position on his tongue. "We have been robbed on your unhealthy roads," stormed the victim. "We must get justice. The Emperor of Mexico shall hear of this. We came to Mexico at his request. We are held up and humiliated and made beggars on his highways. Is this the way to treat distinguished visitors? We must get those villains."

The local authority by this time had realized the

seriousness of the midnight call, and led the party into his office, his back parlor.

"Now your name, please," asked the justice, settling down to business.

"My name? Do you not know Manuel Garcia——"

"Your business, please."

"My business? Singer, impressario, opera composer, teacher, foremost authority on music in the world."

"Where located?"

"The world!" Garcia shouted with increasing vehemence and injured dignity as the justice became more deeply immersed in his questions.

"Be more specific, sir. Where is your store?"

This was too much. Garcia's mustache bristled. His face became illumined with that Andalusian fury which endeared him in days gone by to his associates in the Paris Opera Italiens. His curly gray hair, like snakes about to spring, appeared to be electrified. His well-proportioned body was ready for combat. The chin was out, the gray eyebrows were bushy and defiant. All of his fifty odd years were to be counted.

Just at that moment, another individual entered the room, a charming young woman rubbing her eyes, and yawning, "What's all this noise, father?" Then, seeing the visitors, "I beg your pardon. Oh! Signor Garcia. How I have wanted to meet you when I heard you sing, and here you are in my home.

Is it a dream? No! I'm so glad you called. Father, ask them to stay. Ask them to stay, please."

"We have some business, my child, go back to bed."

"Oh, father, can't I stay? I've wanted so to talk with Signor Garcia."

"Let her stay, justice, and tell you who I am. Then maybe you will get down to what I want," the infuriated man yelled. Then, turning to the girl. "Tell him who I am and that I have been robbed of everything I have. Ask him what he is going to do about it. We must get the brigands."

In ecstatic terms the young girl impressed upon her father the importance of his nocturnal visitor, and the mishap he had met with. In Mexican Spanish the two conversed, and finally the girl turned to Garcia.

"My father says he is sorry for the trouble you have had. He hopes your worship will understand that such robberies as this are very frequent and it is impossible to find the gang. They are outlaws and you might as well figure that you cannot bring your money back by worrying. My father asks that you accept his hospitality for the night and as long as you like until you get resources to enable you to move on."

All of this the young girl said with much ceremony, while her father now thoroughly awed by the importance of the victim, was nodding his head at every word.

Garcia looked at his companions and then broke into a coarse laugh full of despondency.

"Well, I've had all sorts of experiences. But this caps the climax. There's only one thing to do. We stay."

And for two weeks they stayed on, waiting anxiously for aid from the outside and developing infinite schemes to raise cash.

The grizzled old warrior of many an operatic fight was a tough one. The daughter of the house tried in all manner of ways to win him.

"You are Spanish, Signor?"

"Yes, born in Seville, where not a piano was to be found for love or money."

"How did you become a singer, Signor?"

"Just came by it, little girl. Sang in chorus as a boy. And found myself drifting to Paris. Went into opera. My voice, my girl—the glory of Europe—Manuel Garcia's tenor-voice. Rossini wrote *Almaviva* for me in "The Barber of Seville." Mozart had me in mind for his "Don Giovanni." I put fire into my singing. I knew how to do it. People liked me for it.

"When I went to Paris first I thought I'd give the critics a surprise, I had my first rehearsal, and all through the song I did it half a note too high! At first the orchestra was horrified. Then they realized what a test of skill and absolute pitch it was and they applauded. They applauded—and here I am now"—and his jaws closed with a snap.

But his young friend was not to be dismayed.

"You wrote some music, Signor, some great music?"

"Whether or not it was great, I cannot say, little girl. But there was plenty of it in Italian, in French, in English. And in your plague-ridden country, I had to translate all the Italian operas into Spanish in order that the seats might be filled. Your countrymen don't like Italian. They will only have their operas in their native tongue. Ridiculous. Look at the English and Americans, they don't bother about it!

"After all my work, directing, translating, to be given this blow. It's just like Mexico to do it. Why, look here, little girl, when I arrived in Mexico City, all ready to begin, I discovered that some of my trunks had been lost. All the score and parts of "Don Giovánni" were gone. We were to open with "Giovanni" three nights later. What should I do, old fool that I am, but write the parts all out, from memory. Fine reward I get, that's sure!"

The fair young questioner smiled at the old fellow's fury and said: "You might almost have done better to have stayed in the United States—except that you made happy so many of us here."

"Better to have stayed in the United States? Better to have stayed in Paris. But up there in New York they treated me like the artist and musician I am!

"I brought opera to the New World. What had

they listened to before? Trash. I gave them their first taste of grand opera—Rossini, Mozart, Donizetti, Bellini, Pergolesi. That was opera. New Yorkers sat up and rubbed their eyes when they saw that Garcia's Italian Grand Opera Troupe was no dream. At first, when they read the announcement, they sneered: 'Signor Garcia has the pleasure to inform the residents of New York he has lately arrived with the best artists of Europe and will have the Park Theater on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He flatters himself that he will give general satisfaction to all.'

"The night we opened—you might call it the opening of America's operatic career—everybody who was anybody was down. Let me see, I saw in the audience their great author, Fenimore Cooper, Joseph Bonaparte, ex-King of Spain, and equally exclusive individuals. Oh, it was the big society function. The listeners went mad, newspapers couldn't find superlatives—and——"

"They called you the second Columbus, didn't they, Signor? The first discovered America, and the second discovered America's music."

"And fine fools they would have been if *they* hadn't praised. I was *Almaviva*, and my daughter, Maria Felicita Malibran. My daughter."

The old man's face grew sad.

"She is the greatest singer of all, is she not, Signor Garcia?"

"Yes, my little girl—that's my little girl—she

sings! There never was a voice like it, in all the world. A bird is not so lyric, nor a poet so poetic. Where are you to-night, my Maria Felicita? Listen, little girl—I know now why that robbery occurred. I am being punished for forcing my daughter to marry that reprobate, Malibran. It was cruel. How could I have done it? To take that pure little thing, just turned seventeen and marry her to a forty-five-year-old adventurer, Malibran. I received money from him. But—I thought him wealthy, I thought he'd be kind. Last I knew, my little Maria was supporting him by singing in the slums and at church —that voice which only opera houses should echo to.

"I always felt—and here's where parents make their mistakes. I had made her, I could do with her as I would. How many lessons I gave her, beating her into singing. Every time she'd make a mistake I'd whip her. Terrible temper of mine, what crimes you committed! People would pass by and at the sound of the screaming would become alarmed. But those who knew said, 'Oh, never mind, it's only Garcia teaching his daughter to sing.' They blamed me for my conduct. But confound it, how can any one hope to be an artist unless she gets it at that price.

"I could make my daughter do anything by looking at her. One time we were to produce "Othello." It was Tuesday and Saturday was the performance. 'Maria, you will sing Desdemona.' 'But, father, I

can't do it in that short time.' 'What's that?' I shouted. 'I will do it, papa'—and she did.

"Oh, but those New York days. The Park Theater was the best place in America. It was lighted by real chandeliers and patent oil lamps—imagine the chandeliers having thirty-five lights each. Any night we were playing you could see all the street lined with carriages. We took in $56,000 the first season, my girl—think of it! I made my little ten thousand—and—oh, confound it—now, I'm penniless again. I suppose I'll be like da Ponte, the Jewish priest, who wrote "Don Giovanni's" lyrics, and went into the wine business."

Again the mouth closed with a snap.

His young companion whispered persuasively, "Perhaps you will teach again?"

"Yes, I will. That's where I belong. Am I not to be remembered as the 'Father of Modern Singing'? I come, young friend, of a long family of musicians and I will leave a long trail behind me. There's my son, Manuel, who invented the throat mirror for doctors and is bringing out fine young singers, like Jenny Lind. But I, old Wolf Garcia —ha, now I know why I wrote in my early days that song "A Smuggler Am I."

He was through. Old Garcia sat with his chin on his hands, his elbows resting on his knees. All the persuasion couldn't win him back to talk.

Questions about New York, Paris, Seville, Malibran, Manuel Garcia, Jr., all were unavailing. His

operas, what were they about? No answer. What about his reign as first tenor at the King's Theater, London? Useless. Who was your favorite composer? What about the days when you improvized your parts in an opera (a story she had read of). Is Garcia your real name?

"You were not a cruel man, Signor Garcia, were you, Signor? Didn't you love very tenderly when you married?"

The man gave a sudden jerk and looked tenderly at the young girl kneeling before him.

"Did I love? Oh, my little friend, I was mad with love. Joquina Sitches was her name. She had lived in a convent and had left it for a brief spell. I met her at a dance, her voice and her smile, her hair and her body won me at once. I loved her, she was my wife—she *was* my wife.

"Come here to me. I will kiss you, little girl. I am glad, I think, that I came to Mexico."

Garcia composed seventeen operas in Spanish, nineteen in Italian, and seven in French. He will be remembered chiefly for his development of opera, then as the great singer and teacher of singers, and as the head of a musical family. He was as coarse and violent as the foregoing picture; but his intelligence and musical understanding are scarcely comprehended in this attitude.

XXIV

FACE TO FACE WITH DVORAK

1841–1904

IN Bohemia is a little town whose name I will not try to pronounce. Close by flows the sluggish Moldau River, which is an outlet of the Elbe. An occasional spot of color marks the site of a farmhouse. Fields of vegetables spread their flat visage to the gaze. A group of cattle or chickens spot the horizon and even a human being is sometimes to be observed. Everything is quiet and peaceful; a place wherein good old Rip Van Winkle might have slept to his heart's content, for it has been the same noiseless, Arcadian retreat since the beginning of time, and is yet, for all I know.

Men creep rather than walk, they talk in a drawl. The excitement of business, of government, of competition has never affected them. The whole world is encompassed in a radius of five miles, and news from without is received with the same incredulity as we listen to a messenger from Mars.

The castle that towers above the little dwellings

is completely foreign to the peasants, who scarcely dare to dream of seeing within the gate and hence do not bother about it—do not even see it.

Babes grow up and become old men and women without need or desire for aught other than is found in the earth and on it, close at hand. Books are rare, although a teacher and farmer are available to show youngsters how to add and spell. The Gospel is listened to with respectful awe. It is declared that no wrong is done or countenanced in the town, and none is to be found in the whole annals of the local councilor-in-chief.

A pleasant, kindly, dozing, very much out-of-date village it is to be sure, where innocence and simplicity mock our worldly passions and show.

Not that I would have you think this Bohemian community is without its revelry. Indeed not! There is the hostelry of Pan Frantizek Dvorak, who divides his time between three occupations: his butcher business, his inn, and his zither. As a butcher he keeps his children fed and clothed with the easily made, comfortable to wear one-piece suits; as an inn-keeper he adds to his revenue and enables his family to join the townspeople in moments of merriment and innocent tippling. And when they have all met together, out comes the zither, and mine host entertains his rotund, rosy-cheeked fellows.

The Dvorak taproom is the city hall of the town. Everybody goes there. Everybody meets everybody else there. What merry evenings of a Friday or

Saturday when Pan Dvorak spreads himself in his entertainment. Back go the tables into a corner and the village band strikes up the dance. Pop goes the courante and the dancing is on. All to the sides! Men on the left, women on the right. Now they're off, running back and forth from partner to partner, the blushing maidens take their way. This is the gayest time in all their simple lives. Each moment is sweet bliss. It's the happiest the villagers know. Such goings on! This chap squeezed that girl's hand so hard (I wonder if he'll marry her). Did you notice how long Karyl kept Fanny for his partner? . . . Sometimes when the weather is mild, the dancers gather on the green and make noisy the resisting stillness of the eventide. The geese scamper in fright, the birds on the trees flutter their wings. Dear me! Shrill sound the voices with "Hej Slovens," and "Sedlak Sed lack." The courante gives way to the furiante, an irregular dance, with curious accent, mad and passionate.

The mothers note the coming of darkness. . . .

"Dear me, the hour is eight, my child, we must home to bed." And as the dumka plays its slow, drawling measures, the town goes fast asleep, to the muddy splashing of the Moldau. And in the butcher shop of Pan Dvorak, the young lad Antonin cannot sleep, for the music still lingers with him, and whole bands and choruses are repeating the melodies with variation beyond end. Such excitement in a little heart! The mere thought of the

music, the mere sight of the village band are enough to send him in very fits of excitement. So how can he close his eyes? He looks out of the window and watches the pigeons and when his father comes up, the little rascal pretends he is fast asleep.

In Bohemia is that little town. Keep it in your mind, dear reader, for a moment. Now the scene changes to America, to the great concert hall, and who would think, for the homage which is paid the composer at the conductor's stand, that he was once that little Bohemian lad who could not sleep?

Antonin Dvorak, acclaimed the greatest of modern composers, declared to be worthy of a place in orchestration alongside Beethoven and Berlioz, has just listened to a reception such as has come to few men in all history—living, he hears immortality placed on his brow. Eighty-five musicians are in the orchestra, three hundred are in the chorus, speeches are made in his honor and the distinguished audience cannot show him enough enthusiastic applause. As director of America's National Conservatory, conductor of orchestra, chorus, and famed composer, this is his right.

He bows until he is tired out. But the audience will not pause. Dvorak can scarcely understand it all. For he is still the same stock of his ancestors. Look at him——

He is a small man and, but for the clothes, a veritable counterpart of his father before him. A little peasant, smiling broadly from ear to ear, and

blushing roundly. The face is anything but classic, with the broad, wide, thick lips, with the heavy mustache and beard, the swarthy eyebrows over the eyes, set far apart by a flat, fat, heavy nose. Not a pretty picture to be sure.

Put him among the élite, as he is now, and he is thoroughly embarrassed, he has nothing to say, not even "about pork," a topic which one critic thought he might be equipped to discuss, for hereditary reasons.

He smiles, tries to mix with society, but can't. So he smiles, walks awkwardly about, and seems so much out of place.

He never knew what learning meant; he wanted music; his father wanted him for his chief butcher-clerk, later to take over the business. It was all right for the son to learn violin for his pleasure, but not for his livelihood and career. But he wanted music, and he had to have it. By stealth he learned the violin, he ran away to Prague and entered the organ school. He took jobs as violin player in cheap orchestras. He played drum, taught music for little fees, managed to get a beggarly pension and struggled on. All the time the quaint old Bohemian melodies were running in his brain, and taking on new forms and new meanings. How to express these inspirations in such a way that they might be played?

Unpolished, unknowing in the ways of the cities, he struggled along as best he might. He played

in the streets to earn enough for his meals. But his ideals were always alive. Sometimes he would persuade the drummer at the opera to let him hide behind the drum, that he might hear the grand music of the masters. On such occasions as these he was in his glory. Every penny he could scrape together was spent in music paper and in gathering the orchestra scores of Beethoven and Wagner; he pored over them in his little garret room, hoping to gain the secret of their style. He never really had a teacher; he gathered his knowledge as he went along with his own native receptivity and understanding.

He earned his way in cafés and saloons, playing as he went, and as he developed into a better musician, more remunerative jobs were offered him, until finally he was accepted as a member of the National Theater orchestra in Prague.

Meanwhile the music was pouring from his pen. Such melody was treasured up in his being, that none could understand where its origin might be. Like Schubert, his possession of original themes was a natural one, it was like a fountain that forever played, like an inexhaustible treasure house of melody. He has written so much—literally tons of music.

But he kept his work to himself, realizing that it was not well to give his compositions to the world until he had ripened in powers. Good friends came to appreciate his genius: Smetana, the sole repre-

sentative of Bohemian music and the founder of the Bohemian opera; Karel Bendl, the conductor of the National Theater orchestra; and finally that reserved, classical representative of cultured music, Brahms. It was Brahms who helped Dvorak through the first real step in his way to fame. He brought about the publication of some of his works. "I couldn't get a publisher to listen to me," Dvorak tells us.

Dvorak is outspoken in his opinions about his past and does not hesitate to tell of his struggles.

"Not until Brahms took an interest in me could I do a thing. How it happened was like this. I was competing for a prize, and I suppose my music seemed so unconventional, and different, the judges were afraid of it. Now, at the time, one of the committee died and Brahms was chosen to succeed him. That master found some merit in my offering. He fought for me, sent for me, gave me the prize, encouraged me to keep on, and himself induced a publisher to take me up. . . . I was too bashful to speak for myself. But after Brahms had arranged matters, they went fairly smooth."

Hands in his pockets, Dvorak nods his head to emphasize the points. "My real troubles came when I was youngest, as I get near the end, I'm becoming successful.

"When I was trying my best to convince my father of my musical ability it occurred to me that it would be a good plan to give him a practical

demonstration. Once I decided to volunteer as soloist at our little church. The whole town was assembled. I was dressed up to kill for the occasion. I took my violin, lifted my bow and—did nothing. I was stage frightened. At home I was whipped for it. But that wasn't as bad as my first appearance as composer. I was a boy then, but I wrote a composition for the village band, made the director promise he would play it as a grand surprise for my father. It was all arranged. 'We will now hear a new work by the young Antonin Dvorak,' the director announced, and my father paled, although I thought I detected a gleam of satisfaction in his eye. 'We have not played this before,' the director continued, 'and this will be in the nature of a public rehearsal.' Everything went well until the trumpet part was announced; oh, it was bedlam, all out of key and a terrible mixup. I was berated by the director and my father. I had written the trumpet part as though it had been for a violin; I did not know that instrument transposed to higher notes."

At this the jovial little fellow laughs and goes on: "I had other trouble, too. I came to be a great admirer of Wagner, so I thought to have my music with its motives and themes à la Wagner. My first opera, "The King and the Collier," was made up therefore in that style, and again it was an awful mess. The people didn't like it, and I had never figured out that the Bohemians weren't trained to

that sort of thing. Our people are simple. They like the melodious, the naïve, the native, the uncultivated. That was a lesson, so I went back and wrote the music over again, with the melodies I knew they would love. Since then, I've been aware always of my natural limitations and virtues. I've not tried to imitate anybody, just to be myself and —Bohemia. I've remembered my boyhood days and the music of Bohemia. . . . Once I wrote a song about my mother. . . . 'Songs my mother taught me, now I teach my children.' And that is literally what I am doing now, teaching my children the songs of my motherland. . . . But I was telling you about the opera, "The King and the Collier." I was saying the second version of the music made them like it. . . . And they did, but the opera was a failure. The lyric was no good. So I went to work a third time, and had poetry written to fit the music. And then my opera succeeded. There was nothing in it of the original opera but the name. It took one solid year of hard work, and at times was discouraging. But I was determined to win."

Dvorak told how, following the early successes, he was invited to England to conduct his great "Stabat Mater" at Albert Hall and the Worcester Festival. "The trouble there in England," Dvorak complains, "is the way they get up late and eat late. My wife and I are accustomed to get up early and have our breakfast. Sir Stanford and his household slept very late, and my wife and I went down into

the dewy garden anxiously and hungrily awaiting our meal."

Later came this trip to America and the acceptance of the post of director of the National Conservatory. In order to present him properly to the American public, the concert of which we speak had been arranged—this affair where the peasant Dvorak tried to be something else.

In the course of our chatting with the great composer, we ask him what he thinks of America's future in an art way, what development we are to expect in our music?

"I am taken by the delightful negro melodies," he answers, seemingly off the point. "When your musicians came to me, I pointed out that there I felt is America's material for real American music. . . . Just as I took our quaint, native Bohemian melodies and molded them into operas, oratorios, masses, overtures, symphonic poems, concertos, so can you do likewise with your negro melodies."

How the plantation represents America with its cities, towns, mountains, rivers, its whites and intellects, I cannot understand. But Dvorak, being of the soil, perhaps sensed something I cannot grasp. In any event, thus came the symphony "From the New World," and other writings. Now what happens? There is only a suggestion of negro and African and plantation. Everything is Dvorakian, which means a naïve, wistful abundance of sentiment. This man is no philosopher in his writings,

he gives us melody notable for the sheer beauty of it, and for the sensations it brings us in the mere hearing of it.

However, no matter what this Dvorak music or any Dvorak music is labeled, I hear the Moldau River sluggishly flowing; I see the Dvorak inn, I hear the dunka and the furiante, and I am lulled into the peaceful restfulness of a little Bohemian town, with its spots of color, its tiny houses, its farms, its curious peasantry, its sleepy atmosphere—a little Bohemian town whose name I will not even try to pronounce.

Dvorak's important works are: "Armida," "From the New World," "The King and the Collier," "Wanda," "Selma Sadlak," "Turde Palice," "Dimitrije," "The Jacobins," "Rusalka, the Water Nixie," "St. Ludmila," Requiem Mass, "The Spectre's Bride," "The American Flag," "Hymn to the Bohemian Peasants," "Stabat Mater," "Der Wassermann," "Die Mittagshexe," "Das Goldene Spinnrad," "Mein Heim," "Husitska," "In der Natur," "Othello," "Carneval," "Slavische Tänze," "Slavische Rhapsodien," "Legenden," "Dumka," "Furiante," "Klänge aus Mahren," "Silhouetten," etc.

To the populace Dvorak is best known by his "Humoresque"—such is fame!

XXV

FACE TO FACE WITH BIZET

1838–1875

I AM Georges Bizet.[1] Be it known that I have been named by my parents Alexandre César Leopold Bizet, a very highflown name with regal sound. It was changed to just plain Georges by my uncle, when he took me as a child into his house and so it remained.

"I am a musician. I think in terms of melodies. I am a composer. I know that such an occupation, to many, is a worthless one—but—but I cannot help it. I am inspired. People laugh at such a notion. In my brain and my heart are endless ideas that plead for utterance. There are scores of operas which I desire to write, endless symphonies to get on paper. I could call off to you a hundred suggestions, any one of which could be made into a masterpiece. Ho—ho—masterpiece! Poof! But

[1] The fiction that Bizet is speaking to the reader is here indulged, and it is interesting to know that this is made up at certain important paragraphs, almost verbatim, of things the unfortunate man actually wrote in his pleading letters.

yes, I insist, I shall tell you in a moment of one alone which could be developed into a world sensation. Wait and see—wait until I get it finished.

"Finished? How—how—if I might only carry myself away, out of sight of the earth, where no thought of mundane living should deter me from my music passions. Say, in a little hut out in a bit of country, or in a garret atop of a miserable tenement, away from things and needs and people —say anywhere that I might concentrate without interruption, without disturbing thoughts of finance, food, dependence, where I might write, just write as it came to me, where I might even encourage my dreams with idling and sauntering among beauties of nature and poetry.

"Ah—but what a foolish dream. One must live!

"This afternoon my pupils will come, and I shall take up the endless attempt again, to drum a bit of rhythm into their systems. It would not be so bad if they had any real talent; but even if they did have it, teaching is a tedium for me. To-morrow I must finish that empty, tiresome arrangement of old melodies for the publisher, and some hack writing for popular music. This one wants a waltz dedicated to her, and that one wants a cornet solo.

"All of this will pay my rent. The landlord must be satisfied. I—I must—I must feed my foolish stomach. My wife must have her trinkets. She must dress. My dear little wife, so patient, so loving, and so tender, yet oftentimes so humanly

annoyed and impatient with her stupid Georges, her slow-moving, unsuccessful husband. Her father was a great composer, papa Halevy—at least a successful one; and she was accustomed to many comforts and marks of fame which we do not now get. Ah, poor thing, some day, though,—some day, some day we'll see. My parents, they must not be allowed to go wanting. They need aid. They are old. They did as much as they could for me when I was a lad. My father now can't work at all, and I—I —well, I am supposed to be successful. I told them I was going to be, and they expect it. And somehow or other, out of sympathy for them, I dare not tell them the poverty, the suffering, the failures, yes, the failures I have known.

"So my opera shall wait. I will get to it. I will. I know it. Soon! Oh, I won't stand it much longer. I'll just throw over all restraint and go to my real work.

"Ah, dear, so I have been saying these months and years. Whenever I get to thinking, I almost go mad. And then I promise myself I will wait no longer. Then, imagine it, I go back to hack writing, interrupting a cherished work with hack writing. All last week I spent my time writing cornet solos and correcting proof as a reader. What can I do though? What would you do? One must live.

"I have had my revenge. I've made those waltzes stupid. I've made the orchestras preternaturally vulgar. The cornets shrieked. No doubt it's just

what they want. If I would give them that kind of junk no doubt they would give me plenty of money in return and fall at my feet. But I won't do it. I am going to do the real music or none at all.

"Such a conflict of emotion. Such a state in which to live.

"It seems only yesterday that I wrote to my parents with great pomposity: 'Do not worry. In return for all your aid I will repay you. You shall never want for silver, that terrible metal to which we are all in subjection. I propose to write two great successes for the Opera Comique. And one hundred thousand francs—that will be nothing. I will bring your name to everlasting fame, and you shall be so proud and on easy street.' Well, I was made over-enthusiastic by my school-day successes. I was only a boy. At first I had not seemed to care to practice. I wanted to be a literary man. But when I started it came so easily. At eighteen I had won the prize at the Academy of Fine Arts over all the students. Next year I won the prize with an operetta. It was an opera bouffe, called "Doctor Miracle." I have competed for the prize of Offenbach. It was produced with success, that is, what seemed a success then.

"Oh, I was a great lad. There was never anybody like me. My mother had started teaching me piano at four and I had gone through real work at seven. I won the Prize of Rome, which is coveted

by all the students. That sent me into Italy, headquarters of opera, and while I was studying there I was in a glow of constant ecstacy. Then came another contest which called for the writing of a mass, but why should I limit myself to such an easy thing? I sent along a two-act opera. Of course, it won. What else could happen? The reigning king of opera, Ambroise Thomas, said that I was the best hope of France, or something to similar effect, and out went my chest and up went my hope and my egotism. All this was before I had reached twenty. It had been a steady ascent. Oh, my dear, how I felt then. Have you ever been a boy who has had a lot of success and adulation? How did you feel? What could I not do? Bring on the problems, bring on the most difficult undertakings. I am strong, I am all-powerful. I was on the upward path, I was on the ladder to success. I was sure to continue my climb until nothing was left to be gained, and, like Alexander, I should sigh for worlds to conquer.

"Such is the impetuosity of youth. Such is the ridiculousness of boyhood. Unharmed by the world of reality these school days seem real. But they are only phantasma, only a vain lure. The lad at school does not dream of the wickedness outside. He is blinded. It is not right.

"But at best in treating with such youngsters as I was, it should be remembered that they are only infants. If I had known, poor silly boy that I was.

"Listen to me. I talk like an old man. I feel

like one. I am worn with fatigue. It is extraordinary that I feel so old. I am only thirty-six, my friends say I look like a boy. My round face fools them, my thick, brown curly hair makes them think I am still full of life. They don't know how tragic I feel inside—here! What is age, but a state of mind. The other day I was watching a man of seventy. He was gay, placid, ingenuous, and active. I looked at him with the manner that a grandfather might assume with his son's son. I felt like his senior.

"But I advance (it is high time). What have I done? Now there was my opera, "The Pearl Fishers," a burst of sunshine and then silence. The tenor was delighted with his arias, the entire cast was pleased with their solos. But yet, what happened? The decision was this: 'It is a failure.' So it was labeled and shelved.

"I wrote a symphony, "Souvenir de Rome." Where do you think that is being played to-night? Nowhere. It's there in the drawer, getting yellow and frayed. And my opera, "The Fair Maid of Perth," the same resting place. One performance. But I have found my path. I must advance in it.

"Critics don't like music. Why, I wonder? They are trying to classify me, I guess. A musician consecrates the purest part of his mind to conceiving and executing a work of art. By turns he believes, doubts, grows enthusiastic, desperate, plays, and suffers. Finally, like a criminal he says, 'See and

judge.' What do the critics do? Analyze him like a beetle! Classify him! Put him in his groove! What does that amount to? For me there exists but two kinds of music—good and bad. Make me laugh or cry, express for me love, hate, fanaticism, crime; charm me, dazzle me, transport me, and I shall love and acclaim you. The artist has no name or nationality, no present or future. He is what he is. That's all, that's all!

"What a stupid system we have. When a man completes a work of art, that composition, be it of music, sculpture, painting or literature, is subjected to the snap judgment of a set of so-called critics, with their private prejudices, opinions, with their desire to say something witty, cutting, clever, irrespective of how it results. The work upon which the artist has slaved is given a brief début before these superior beings who may come late and leave early, or squeeze the performance in between a supper, a reception, and a private argument or love match. A snap judgment may praise it or condemn it. That first decision means nothing. I do not care for criticisms of a début. They are generally worthless. They are generally reversed by later experience. Nearly every master we now accept was laughed to scorn by his first critics. Nearly every success of years ago is now forgotten. What is to be done? I am accused: 'You are a Wagnerite. You write in his style, therefore you are no good.' There you are—Richard Wagner, going through

such tortures as I am—not so much, though, because he is readier to fight, not like I am. But Wagner. I *know*, I know as I live, that he is great, far greater than all these little prating, picking, whining, cringing, cruel critics. See how they pick me up, put me under the magnifying glass, and classify me—a Wagnerite. I don't write like Wagner. I write like myself. I write as I feel. I write as I must. Why not say, 'Bizet pleases or he doesn't,' not that he *is* of this, or that school.

"Now behold me stealing a few crumbs of time to work out my newest musical hope. Actually stealing it. Looking over my shoulder for fear I may be called to task. Because what will I get out of it? Stealing my time, on a speculative venture, on my newest and greatest musical hope. I told you of it before, the idea which can be made into a world sensation. Would you like to know more about it? It is a story of Merimee that I have taken of a gypsy, a cigarette girl. She isn't a new thought. She has been all through history, the wrecker of men's souls. Her name is *Carmen*. I am giving her notes that pierce like her poignet. She sings no idle measures. She is the drama in opera.

"Greater than my music to "L'Arlésienne," greater than anything I have ever attempted—in her I shall live or die.

"It is brilliant, it is alive, it is gay. But with a gayety that permits of style. I have taken the *Toreador*, and given him red, red music to infuriate

the oncoming bull. It is Spanish in theme and motive, though I have at times branched clearly away from traditional melodies and used my own conceptions.

"*Carmen!* I have made her a torturer, a fiend, a maddening coquette. I could almost love her myself. She is temptation incarnate. What joy to breathe life into her voice?

"What will the critics say to it? What will they sneer with condescending manner? 'Bizet, better stick to your piano rather than your pen.'

"Are they right? When I was fourteen I was a master pianist. I could do anything at the keyboard. When I was twenty-four my teacher, Halevy, took me to a dinner at which Franz Liszt was one of the guests. After we finished our meal, the great pianist gave one of his thunderous technical numbers. We were all delighted and amazed by the wondrous fugue work. 'There are only two pianists in Europe who can play that as it should be played, von Bülow and myself,' Liszt said. Halevy turned to me. He whispered, 'Can you remember that difficult passage?' I blushed, but my teacher led me to the piano and scarcely knowing what I did, I played it. Liszt came to me in his fine, friendly, unselfish way and clasped his arm around me. 'You have played it perfectly,' he said. 'I have made a mistake. I have said that only two men could do it, but I should have said three; and to be just, I must add that the youngest is perhaps the most daring and brilliant.'

"Yet what is piano playing when a great score is waiting to be written?

"But, hear me talk—talk—talk. I guess I shall go to work. Time is short.

"Oh, dear, there is the bell. Miss Wantie? Tell her I'll be there. One must live. What an empty head—her parents think because they have money she must have music. . . .[2]

. . . . . .

"The day I waited for so long is here, the day that I dreamed would be my salvation. Oh, let me flee from the city. Its cruel visage stares me out of countenance. It mocks me, taunts me, laughs at me. "Carmen" has been played, and the audience, huge, how cold and still as death they listened. A faint flutter of hands for my *Toreador*, a semblance of applause for my Habanera. A recall for the Seguidilla.

"I heard the critics in the lobby. They didn't even hush when they saw me coming near. 'It's supposed to be Spanish, and it isn't.' And several suggested, 'More of the Wagnerian stuff. It's sick-

[2] The passage of two years is indicated at this point. After unbelievable suffering Bizet brought himself to finish his beloved opera. Despite the failures of his past scores, the powers that be decided to give "Carmen" a chance. A new prospect of hope was born in Bizet. He was certain he could not fail then. On March 3, 1875, he went to the opening performance at the Opera Comique, confident, almost as confident as in the years of his impetuous successful boyhood.

He came out of the theater—but listen to what he is saying.

ening.' 'Commonplace,' one of them said. 'Immoral,' added another. 'The woman doesn't deserve to be permitted in a grand opera house. It smacks of the cabaret.'

" 'The work of a hack,' says another. 'He simply doesn't know how to write. Originality is beyond him. Well, it will never be heard again.' One of the stage men sneered. I appealed to the maestro. He shook his head emphatically. I spoke to the impressario. He said, 'Too bad. We gave it a chance. It's dead.'

"Can it be? Am I but a hack? Is my "Carmen" worthless? Perhaps they are right, but I can't believe it. Time will tell. Time will tell. Time will avenge me.

"I will throw myself into the river. I will end it all. I can't go home. I can't face all that grind and torture again. I can't go back to the hack writing. I can't look at the pupils. The publishers, even of the hack stuff, will wink behind my back. I can never try again at the opera. . . . But I don't believe them. I have faith. I will do it yet. And "Carmen" will be like those other great works that were condemned at first. . . .

"Oh—my God—what can I do? All night I've been rushing about like this. Morning comes upon me. What a morning! Oh, my God.

"Ah, well, I sigh. I will go back to my wife and my home and my pupils. I advance. I am ahead anyway. Some day maybe I will get there.

"Yes, I'll be in directly. Sorry to have kept you waiting, Miss Salwin. Another lesson. Three to-day at two francs. One must live." [3]

Bizet's important works are: "Carmen," "L'Arlésienne," "The Pearl Fishers," "Doctor Miracle," "Ivan," "Roma," "Jeux d'Enfants," "Fair Maid of Perth."
Book about the composer: Biography by Pigot.

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[3] So was "Carmen" received, the opera which to-day holds the record of performances; which now is the staple in every repertoire, the opera in which the most famous artists have gloried, and from which millions have been earned.

So did Bizet find his masterpiece received. Three months later, think of it, he died of a broken heart. He passed out in the arms of his young wife, saying that he believed time would tell. Time has told, Bizet. Rest and be content.

XXVI

FACE TO FACE WITH MOUSSORGSKY

1839–1881

"MODEST PETROVITCH MOUSSORGSKY, you drunken sot, get you home to your bed and sleep off your liquor. Don't come back until you're sobered up, if it takes all year. I have a good mind to ask permission from the Government instantly to dismiss you, contract or no contract. You ruin discipline. You never work anyway. You're disgusting, you're a vile, ugly thing."

It was in the office of the Imperial Comptroller. The man who spoke so vehemently was Fedor Mikhail, the chief clerk, and the man who listened sleepily was the lesser clerk, Moussorgsky. The thin, sallow-skinned superior was thoroughly disgusted with this man. He looked at him with venomous contempt, spoke as he might to a dog. Time and again this had happened, he was incurable. Of what use was the old ruffian? Old? Why, Moussorgsky was no older than Mikhail, who him-

self was scarcely forty years of age, but Modest Petrovitch already looked fifty or more.

Shaking and trembling as with the ague, the wretch stood disgraced, saying not a word, holding his cap in his hand, and glancing vengefully out of his bleary eyes. Fat, bloated, dissipated beyond conception, he was indeed a very picture of ugly, besotted bestiality. His face was red and blotchy with unkempt black beard, mustache and shabby hair, lazy, dissolute eyes, and the typical vodka nose. He wore a svitka, the striped blouse which loosely fell to his waist, also high boots and bloomers.

"Get out, don't stand there. How do you think this place looks with you in it? Go and take this advice, Modest Petrovitch Moussorgsky, nothing will save you again, not even your cursed music, remember. Next time I'll take the law in my own hands and tear up your commission and the Government will stand by me."

The culprit muttering unspeakable curses under his breath staggered to the door, and out on the street of Moscow. At the exit, he clutched his cap in his fist and raised it in frightful imprecation for the cruel Mikhail. That Mikhail was justified, of that there was no doubt. Mikhail had been mean, to be sure, officious, little cognizant of Moussorgsky's hidden nature, but he was justified. Moussorgsky was a vile creature.

Modest Petrovitch Moussorgsky tried to bring his befuddled brain to concentrate on certain points.

move attracting the least notice of the passersby? Which way to go home, what direction? How to Was it that way past the saloon or this way past the café? How difficult to determine! What a task. His brain wouldn't operate. He could not remember. He couldn't make a decision.

While he was striving to figure the problem, the door behind him opened and quickly closed. Young Hanov emerged guiltily.

"Moussorgsky, Modest Moussorgsky," he whispered, "I am so sorry. I slipped away from my desk. Nobody saw me. I will help you home."

In the youthful countenance of Yermalai Hanov was a look of such tenderness for the old sot, that one might well wonder what about the culprit there could be to win the love of such a clean-faced, open-eyed, honest, poetical lad. Moussorgsky pulled himself together that he might understand this new situation with which he was confronted.

"Straight ahead," Hanov said.

He tried to open his eyes, to lift his head, to stay the trembling.

"Waz that?"

"I'm going to bring you to your house, my friend, I am going to help you home, that's all." Without further ado, young Hanov took the burly arm and directed the wretch to a droshky standing at the curb.

As the horses skipped away, at the strokes of the driver's whip, the wheels rolling over the curb-

stones, rattling, rattling, the carriage jolting the riders against each other, the young Hanov sadly shook his head.

This was his idol, the great Moussorgsky, the marvelous composer, whose music, to the boy's mind, ought to be the ideal of any Russian. A student himself with ambitions to write for the symphony and the opera, Hanov had watched Moussorgsky, listened to his music and adored it. Curiously, this was the first time Hanov had been together with the musician outside the Government office, where both were cogs in the wheel of the financial department of His Majesty, the Emperor. Hanov had played some of the Moussorgsky songs and piano numbers. He had been at the opera to hear "Boris Godunoff." He would have given anything to know the master and to win his way into the circle of Cui, Rimsky Korsakoff, Borodin.

In the office, there was a barrier between Moussorgsky and the rest of the clerks. Outside the office, Moussorgsky left the business of the bureau behind him.

Nobody but Hanov seemed to notice the incongruity of the musician at the desk, in the department he was a nonentity anyway. He was worse than that, a worker skating on very thin ice, a drunkard who habitually knocked off from the job once or twice a month, a fellow of the lowest habits, a ruffian, and a fiendish fighter. As the wheels moved over the stones, they played to Hanov the accom-

paniment of Moussorgsky's "Song of Death." Hanov shook his head despairingly and wondered at the strangeness and perverseness of things—this, their first social engagement!

And now here they were together, the master, the boy's idol, a lump of filthy flesh, sitting beside the poetical, ambitious lad. . . . Hanov didn't know where to go. The driver cared little. The longer they drove, the more he made.

Moussorgsky was dead to the world; but by dint of much shaking and questioning, the lad finally managed to elicit information as to Moussorgsky's street address. Hanov could scarcely believe the facts—Pavlasky Street was in the cheapest part of the city. . . . However, arrived there, Hanov suffered another shock, it was an ugly residence, the filthiest in the whole street. To make certain the lad first inquired of a naked little boy at the door if Moussorgsky lived there. The child laughed and said: "Sure, that's the old drunk in the carriage. That's him."

One awakening of the sort after another was enough to shake any idol from its pedestal.

But Hanov did not shrink from his companion. He shook him gently, then violently, waking him from his stupor-sleep, then pulled him from the droshky, paid the driver and inquired for the Moussorgsky apartment.

The "apartment" had three rooms. The largest of these had a great stove and near the door to the

kitchen, a bed, a broad low bench which served as a bunk, a table, a heavy tabouret, and books scattered all over the floor.

Moussorgsky gave a stupid glance of recognition, and throwing himself on the bed, was soon snoring in heavy slumber. Hanov went out, returned to the office, made a lying excuse and finished his work, long after the rest had gone.

All day long he could not forget his idol. After a hasty bite of supper, Hanov returned to the temple of the idol.

Moussorgsky was sitting up, at the table, thoroughly sobered. As Hanov entered the room, the culprit looked up angrily. . . . From the office, how dare they break in on his privacy?

"I came to see how you were feeling, Modest Petrovitch Moussorgsky, I brought you home this morning."

Instantly Moussorgsky's frown vanished. He jumped up with an air of humiliation, clasped the youth with both hands and thanked him. After a while: "I suppose I'm through at the office, Yermolai Hanov?" asked Moussorgsky. "If I'm not, I ought to be."

"Oh, I guess not, sir," said Hanov with deep feeling. "At least, sir, I hope not. Mikhail won't say anything this time. I know him. He likes me. I'll try him, sir. But you know," continued the lad hesitatingly, "please I beg of you, I hope, I pray—why don't you make an effort to prevent another

time? You—I beg your pardon, but you can put a stop to it. And, oh, I'd be so happy."

The older man looked hard at the boy. "Hanov, why do you say that?"

"Because, sir," said the youth, bursting with the words he had been rehearsing a hundred times, "I'm mad about your music. I could fall at your feet for what you've done. Oh, I—oh, sir, your honor, I am a young student, hopeful in music. And because I can see the things you feel I worship you. I suppose you must work here, and I'd hate to see you out of a job if that would interfere with your living to write music in between times. I'd hate to see you leave the place now that I just know you, but why really, Modest Moussorgsky, do you work there anyway? Can't you just do your writing? Why is it?"

Moussorgsky was silent for a moment, and then he threw back his head and literally bellowed.

"Why, Yermolai Hanov? Because you couldn't keep a bird in socks with the money my music brings me."

Hanov stared in amazement, scarcely believing.

"But "Boris Godunoff"—that was a success. That brought you much. And your piano music I've heard brought you much. And your songs. I've heard them in many places. Everybody seems to be doing your songs."

"Not enough to pay my board, my boy. People don't believe in me. They think I'm an amateur

because I work, but I only work because I must do it. I'd rather write music, of course. That would be wonderful, to have enough money to do my music —the music of my heart's dream. . . . To speak for Russia, to give voice to the great soul of her, to announce in accents bold and fearless the wild savagery of her. . . . But Hanov, my friend, why are you interested in me?"

"Because, because, master——"

At the word master, Moussorgsky lifted his chin and bit his lip. Then shaking his head as if to deny the thought, he put his arm around the shoulder of his young admirer, who continued:

"Because, master, you are the voice of Russian music which is beckoning to me, the call I am mad to follow and to carry on. . . . Because, master, I would make myself your servant, just to be near you, to see at close hand the genius of you. . . . Because I would fight for you!"

"You are a brave fellow, Hanov," the musician declared, "a very brave fellow. Most musicians are afraid of me. They don't understand me, because I do not look on music as something abstract—a phase only of the æsthetic emotion. It is a living art. It is dramatic, it speaks its own fiery language. Those academic composers who live by laws and theories take my work as eccentric. They say I don't know the rules—I'm not a trained musician. The h—— with their laws and their training. They are meant to be broken. Why should I imitate

others? I have enough ideas not to follow conventions. Ideas! Where are their ideas? They haven't any and so they make a pretty fuss and framework for a lifeless message. I have a million schemes. . . . Every tone I say should express a word. Music to me is a living page without words. I almost don't need words. . . . So you are a brave lad, for I am walking a century or so ahead of our day. Yes, I am walking in untrodden grounds—maybe they are all right! Maybe I am not a musician, maybe I am something else. So be it. I am something else."

Hanov raised his hand aloft. "I believe in you. I do not understand all of your music. I stand awestruck before the native bigness of your themes. Sometimes I think when I hear a phrase of your music that I am gazing down a mountain abyss."

Moussorgsky smiled.

"You are a poet, you've a fine sense of interpretation," he murmured. "Would that all Russia or Russian musicians thought as you do. Then I wouldn't be as I am. I'd be writing what I feel. I can tell you, Yermolai Hanov, that being over there at the office is torture to me. I don't want to stay, but I must. All my life, I've had to do what I don't want to do. Here in Russia, a composer can't get along. There's Borodin, a doctor one day, a musician the next. He's satisfied. But not I. . . . I'll tell you, Yermolai, about myself, and then you'll

decide if I'm as bad as you think. That's all right, boy. Down there, I'm a dog. I admit it, I am, but wait. Listen.

"Something has always stood in my way. My father, Pyotr Alexyovitch, was a little noble, a small landowner, and he loved music. My mother was of the family of Shirikof and she taught me piano. Not to make me a musician, but just to round out my studies. I was to go in the army. That was my destiny. . . . We had a nurse, an old woman full of superstition and weird customs. When I was very small she would tell me legends and myths of Ivan Tsvarovitsch, the hero bold, and of Tsarevena, she who was the most beautiful woman in all the world, and of Kascher, the terrible fiend, and of Balayaga, the powerful. See how my mind worked? Even when I was not yet ten, I played music-pictures of the characters. I would say, 'Nurse, here's what Balayaga sounds like.' And she'd say, 'Bless the child—but that's right.'

"My first piece was the "Ensign's Polka"—I was sixteen years old, quite a dandy and a pupil of the Military Academy, a member of the Perebrashnoy Guard Regiment. You would never imagine how I looked then. Now see me, in this fat, helpless frame. Then I would have died if a button were loose or if a speck were on my suit. I was the pet of the ladies, the daughters and wives of the officers. I liked them. They liked me. I sang, I had a nice baritone voice. I wrote little catchy, insipid things,

played at the piano snatches of Italian operas. I was on the road to banality and ordinaryism.

"It was around this time that I met Borodin, who was composing music while off duty as a hospital surgeon. Borodin gave me my first new ideas of bigger things. He spurned everything foreign. He wanted just Russian ideals. Then came my friendship with Cæsar Cui, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Dargonyski, and Balakeriew. I was being inundated with the Russian spirit, the cry for a national school of music —to build upon Glinka's heritage. When I announced that I was leaving the army and going in earnest into music, many laughed at me. They told me I needed to study, to perfect the old forms. I struggled along, I was poor. I lived part time in Rimsky-Korsakoff's house. I took this job.

"Suddenly one day I broke loose, and almost burst in two. The new idea had come. I tore open my collar, threw away my tie and grew a beard. The old forms of music no longer seemed complete. I wanted freer, loftier means. To the ash-heap with convention. To the cellar with pretty imitations of French and Italian music.

"I heard the Kazaks calling, wild, warlike, rough, and upright. I heard the turbulence of the chase, the war days, the freedom of the steppes and the plains. From the icy north to the blazing south.

"Russia was crying out. I heard the pleadings and the balalaikas, the Barynya Sudaryno, the Romaraynskaya, legends of the frontier. Balayaga

and his crew waited utterances, Tartars, Kazaks, Ukranians. Thus came the opera "Boris Godnoff," the usurper Czar, with his scum of robber bands making all Russia quake with fear. The false Dmetry, renegade monk, and the Bandel of Tushino cried out. The peasantry, the fear-trodden serfs were sobbing at my feet. The Jews, massacred and robbed, pleaded for a spokesman. I heard little children and their nurses—real, of our soil, not of Italy or Germany, ours! Ours! One day from my window I heard a poor idiot slobbering and crying as he held in his arms the village beauty, trying to get her to kiss him. That made a song. Once I saw a boy studying for the priesthood, saying his prayers and looking at a pretty girl. Oh, irony, that made a song. I saw about me types of Russia everywhere. I put them into music. I didn't bother about form or style. I spoke!

"Lo, I spoke and what happened? None of my orchestral poems has yet been heard. My first opera is in my desk. *Boris* shows but little spirit.

"The result? I hate, I hate, I hate civilization. Sure we love old Russia. Ha, ha! Revolution, freedom, anarchy, revolt.

"To strangle my real nature, neither to be loved nor to love; neither to pity nor be pitied is my aim. I lay myself on the altar of truth and art for art's sake—nothing else! I am for Russia, not mixed dilutions, but pure. Revolt—down with the old. Out with the sickish, perfumed opera. Let us breathe

in the open air. Let us be ourselves. Down with the weak.

"Revolt, revolt—revolt!"

Important works of Moussorgsky are: "Boris Godnoff," and "Khovantschina." Piano sketches called "Pictures from an Exhibition," "The Swaggerer," "The Seminarist," "The Dneiper," "Hopak," "Song of the Flea," "Peasant Cradle Song," "Savischna," and many other songs.

Book about the composer: Nathan's "Moussorgsky."

XXVII

FACE TO FACE WITH LALO

1823–1892

IN the big cities how few people know the quiet and solitude which are to be enjoyed in their little parks, some of them cozily placed in the very centers of the busiest sections, resting at the elbows of the factories. If you were to ask many of the people about these little bits of rustic country in the city, they couldn't tell you where they are, and you would be forced to point the way for these unobserving citizens.

But the parks do not go untenanted. The parks have their friends. Regular friends, who do not willingly miss a single day in visiting the green, grassy knolls. There are mothers with their carriages and little ones; poetic lads and lasses come in the daytime, to read or dream great dreams. And old men, past the days of busy activity, rest in the sunshine and follow the evolution of the flowers from bud to blossom and then decay. Some come to the little parks to fade out of sight; there in the quiet sunshine, on the wooden benches, they are less

conspicuous than on the rushing streets, a few steps away. There is a calm and a repose which is gladdening to tired souls.

Thus it has been in a little park in the center of Paris. The same sort of people come and go daily. Many become friends to each other and a few never see the others. Perhaps it is the innate delicacy of these folk, who would escape the gaze of the world, solemnly to pretend not to know of the existence of their fellow refugees. Not because, I am sure, they are wrapped up in themselves, or misanthropes, haters of humanity, kicking at the universe, despisers of life, but rather for the opposite reason; they themselves are kicked and tossed about, and are ashamed to look straight into other eyes.

On every day that the weather was not too severe, there would come to the Parisian country-park, an old gentleman, wrapped in a coat much too long for his little shriveled body. It was a coat which may have been made for him, but this was doubtful. It was so large and so wide that when it was buttoned up, it looked like a sack emptied of its contents. This might have been explained as due to the change which takes place in one's constitution through the course of years, the years being written in shining marks on the bravely striving threads of the coarse material. Some vulgar persons might have said directly that it was a hand-me-down from a kindly friend. But the old man's face was one on which charity would have been embarrassed to

smile with generosity. The buttons were large as on a policeman's great coat. It was a coat made for heavy winter, but the winter of a man's life is always cold, even when springtime buds and sunshine smiles.

The old man loved the sunshine especially well, and it was always his pleasure to sit where the sun shone strongest and warmest, and made him blink his eyes until they closed.

It was quite a system the way he selected his bench. One could see him every morning around eleven o'clock coming down the city street, a book under one arm, and a violin case under the other. Coming down the street, he looked neither to right nor left, but ploddingly made his way to the park entrance through the gates. He never bothered any one and if he had thought for one moment that he was being watched, as he came to his daily siesta, it might have frightened him away. Oftentimes well dressed people nudged each other at his passing and laughed aloud. It hurt the old man, he seemed to shrivel more at the laughter. Boys seeing what there was funny about him, sometimes mocked, but he never said anything to them. Dogs would bark at him, but that frightened him less, for he would shake his head and put out a trembling hand and whistle a little—the dogs understood and barked in a different way than at first, obviously a more friendly way.

When he entered the park, he would pause,

straighten up, and look all around, not with a gusto of importance, but in a meek way of seeing what there was to be had among the benches. There are many benches, with different settings, breezes blowing in different ways—one has the privilege of selecting any one. Therefore, he always looked around, weighed the advantages carefully, and then chose the same bench, always the same bench. Other regulars at the park during the course of time had admitted, by tacit consent, the old man's ownership to the particular bench, so they never used it, leaving it free for him. Once or twice strangers to the park, not knowing the enormity of the offense they committed, sat upon the old man's seat. The old man noticed it, seemed bewildered, but never took another seat. He stood there a few minutes and then went out of the park, not in any tantrum or anger, but in a manner of apology as if saying, "I didn't mean to intrude, I hope you will pardon me, if I seemed to be thinking of taking that bench. I will come back." He would walk around the outside of the park and take another glimpse at the bench. Inasmuch as the offenders were generally strangers and therefore transients, they never stayed long, and when the old man came back, the third or fourth time, they were gone. Then he would go to the bench, carefully place his violin at one side, sit down exhausted, remaining quiet for a space, open his book and read for a few moments, five minutes say, and place the volume also on the seat on top

of the violin case. Then he would fold his hands and dream, for an hour and a half or so, until the sun was past noon. He would then rise in a flutter of excitement that said, "Dear me, I've stayed too long, I'm late; dear me, I've forgotten my work," and off he'd go out of the park, head shaking.

He was a very old man it appeared at first glance, a hundred years old maybe. But as you looked closer you judged the wrinkled face to be not more than sixty. When he removed his hat, which he always did, and placed that, too, by his side, on the book, his luxuriant white hair explained a little about his very ancient and his near ancient personalities. The hair was brushed back straight from the high forehead, and was very bushy over the ears, not being cut very often, it might seem. The nose was straight and aristocratic in its mould, the skin very white and pure, the eyes small and shy, the beard snowy white and silky, growing down the sides and a little over the chin. A mustache was neatly rolled, and it was an occasional habit with the gentleman to run his nervous, thin right hand over the mustache, rolling it down to the beard, thus unintentionally accentuating the littleness of the face and his corresponding person.

It was the hardest thing in the world to win his confidence so that he would talk. Dozens of times I would walk by his bench and try to nod, "Good morning," but the old man looked away. I have tried hard to figure out why he was so distant, but

I put it down to shyness. He feared to gaze up at me in what might be a breach of good conduct. He was afraid to appear to be imposing himself, and was totally incapable of imagining that he held an interest for any one else. Thus, he never looked in a conversational way upon a living soul, except the little babies who toddled on the grass and who couldn't be offended, and whose speech was limited to "goo-goo."

One day I had the temerity to sit on the famous bench after he had taken possession. The old man was all upset. He instantly made haste to remove his belongings: his hat, his book, his violin case, himself. I said, "Please don't move."

He looked over toward me, with a startled expression mingled with one of unexpected affability.

"Don't move," I said, "there's plenty of room."

"Yes," said he, "yes, yes, so there is, so there is," and he sat down, folded his hands and went on dreaming, until his time for departure.

My first siege had been very unsuccessful. But after a few days, the old man didn't move away when I came. He even nodded at me. Another time, I said, pointing to the violin case, "You play?"

"Yes," he answered timidly, "I did."

"You are a violinist?" I said after a pause.

"No, not exactly—the truth is, sir, I play viola."

"In the orchestras?"

"I did—also I played in quartettes," he volunteered, which was something gained in winning his

confidence. Another time he had grown so brave that he timidly confessed that he wrote some music. This was a case! Quite a character. A forlorn musician composer. How the old fellow could write was more than I could see. However, I had put him down as a dabbler who had never done anything, who even in his old days was still dabbling, and still unable to find himself.

But something about the old man was intensely likable, and remarkably cultured. He was so quiet, so inoffensive, and so self-effacing that even while he was timidly talking, he seemed not to be there, taking up no space, breathing no air. His hands were always clasped, his voice pitched low as a viola and as timorous.

One morning he didn't arrive, Mr.—Mr.—why then I recalled that I knew him as the old viola player, for I had never asked his name. The old viola player didn't put in an appearance. It was a beautiful day in May when all the world was joyous. There was no excuse for remaining indoors and forgetting the little park. This was the day of days for the park. It had been cold, now it was balmy. I was a little annoyed. Really, I thought it strange. Besides I had come to the conclusion that I was going to ask my friend to let me hear him play some of his music. I had come to like my old companion, and I missed him. Why hadn't I thought to ask his name and address? Maybe he was ill and needed aid. I asked several of the regulars in the park.

No, they didn't know. Another day came and no old man, another day and then a week, and a month. Then I gave him up, I abandoned all hope of ever seeing him again. I had pictured him sick and dying in some old hole of a room. Several times I had hated myself for being so stupid and unfeeling.

However, one morning, coming down the street, I saw my old man—but a quite different sort of an old man. The too long coat had gone and in its place another coat, newer, but still too long, had been substituted. The violin case, I mean viola case, had disappeared from under the arm and there was no book. He entered the park, straightened up, looked about, with a little more alacrity, but not by any means with aggressiveness. He mentally eliminated the benches from consideration, and decided on the same bench of course.

"I am glad to see you," I said, shaking hands with him, "I was afraid you were ill."

"Ill? Ill?" he said with a faint hint of a laugh, "oh, no, very well, very well. I'm a great success, now, a great success. Don't you think I look very well?"

"Why, yes," I answered, "I was just going to say how well, and—uh, prosperous, if I may say so, how prosperous you look."

The old man puffed up a trifle at the word prosperous. "Why, I'm a great success now, a great success. They've produced it and it's a success. Yes, it's a success." He gave these words with such a

brave show of enthusiasm, that the softness of his then low voice appeared strange and dramatic.

When we were seated, I said, "I have to congratulate you. But what is it they produced?" At this show of utter ignorance, my friend glanced back at me over his shoulder to see if I were fooling with him.

"So it is, I forgot, you don't know. Why, I will tell you. "Le Roi d'Ys"—"The King of Ys," he said with a burst of laughter, and a touch of modest embarrassment.

I looked hard at the old man. That opera was the talk of all Paris since it had been first heard a month ago, the composer was acclaimed by the world. The old man looked smilingly at me. "Why, why—the composer of "Ys," is Lalo," I said.

"Yes, Lalo, Lalo, that is I—Lalo, sir, yes, yes, Lalo."

"Lalo," I shouted, "well I never knew. You are Lalo," I clasped his hands, "and you are the composer of my beautiful violin classic, the Symphonie Espagnole?"

"Yes, yes, that is I," said the old man with a feeble attempt at putting out his chest.

For a moment I was so stunned I could say nothing. Then I took his hands again and said, "Please forgive me for my inner thoughts which doubted you."

"That's nothing, my son, that's nothing, you thought the old man was romancing when he told

you he wrote music? Well, that's been the trouble of all my life, they didn't believe I could write. That's always been my trouble. You're all right, you've been kind—they weren't. It's a late time for me to reach a success, don't you think? Since I was a youngster, I've been waiting for it. A long while, don't you think? Enough to discourage anybody, don't you think? But I've always believed in my music, that's been my salvation; I've lugged the manuscript of that opera around for nearly a quarter of a century, begging this one and that one to help me. The pages are yellow and frayed and worn. But the notes are not, my boy. It took lots of patience, lots of perseverance, but they couldn't exhaust me, no, siree, they couldn't exhaust me. I knew it would come out. I told myself so, I told my wife—God rest her soul—that she wasn't spared to see the truth of my words. I knew it. I wouldn't be downed. It's in my blood to be a sticker, yes, siree. I may seem weak, but I am not.

"You know I was born in Lille, and anybody born in that city has to be brave and never give up. It's a law of the city, 'Don't give up, citizens of Lille.'

"To-day, I'm, let me see, I'm just about to be seventy years old. I've written songs, oh, yes, in the summertime of my life, I sang. My songs were many, but I guess nobody liked them excepting my wife and myself. I think two hundred copies were sold. I played viola in the quartette, and you know how rarely the viola is soloist, he's always support-

ing the rest. I also wrote chamber music, but it wasn't liked. There was the time when I was about forty, when I almost gave up. I didn't write for years. I wrote other operas before this one, this—this famous one. You never heard them, or you never heard of them. "Fiesque" was one. Hardest luck with that you ever saw. Ten years to get it accepted and then trouble all through the rehearsals, and by gosh, announced for performance and pulled off the boards. That's a disappointment to knock the spirit out of anybody, what do you say, yes, sir, enough to kill anybody. But not me. Next I wrote a ballet, that you know, "Namouna," pretty, wasn't it? But I wanted to produce an opera. "Neron" was started and never finished. Such a hoodoo life. Truth of it is, all my ambition was centered on this "Le Roi d'Ys." Twenty-five years, that's how long I've been trotting it around. Every producer, every manager, every conductor has heard it and rejected it—until now. Ah, ah, ah—but that's all done. Now I'm going to start all over. I'm going to keep all Paris agog, you see if I don't. You see if I don't."

During this long talk, the old man had completely forgotten himself, and by this time he was practically exhausted. He sat back, clasped his hands and dreamed again as he used to do. He looked up at the sky, the sun was past noon. He jumped up as if it were absolutely imperative that he leave without a moment's delay. He was late.

"Oh, my, my, my rehearsal's at two, I must hurry, they keep me busy, they do keep me busy now. Good-by, good-by, good-by."

And the old man with timid steps looked about him and went out of the park.

A spirit of glad thankfulness was all over the little bit of country, for its dear friend had achieved his dreams and the haze of the sunshine pictured a great joyousness of hope attained.

Lalo's works include the Violin Concerto in F; "Symphonie Espagnole," the opera "Le Roi d'Ys," and the "Allegro Symphonique," "Norwegian Fantasie," "Ballet Namouna," "Concerto Russe," and the "Symphony in G Minor."

XXVIII

FACE TO FACE WITH WEBER

1786–1826

WHEN Carl Maria von Weber arrived in Dresden in the year of 1816 he found a reception which was not altogether to his liking. The King of Saxony had commissioned him to reorganize the Royal Opera, a task which was not lightly to be handled but indeed required the most skillful direction and the most artistic taste.

Weber found enemies everywhere. Some who pretended to be chiefest in their desire to aid him, who professed love and esteem fawned upon him, but knifed him when his back was turned. As rivals the powerful Rossini and Spontini, in the zenith of their powers, directed the full force of their machines against the slender, pale-faced young man, who had been enthroned in the chief executive position of the opera house. To be sure, it was admitted that he was a fine musician, he could play piano as none other in Europe, he could conduct an orchestra with skill, but that didn't make him a composer or a musi-

cian of the caliber to rule the destinies of the theater. So the enemies spoke, and politically he had the whole crew against him.

Though Weber quickly won the admiration of the public and most of the company for the precision of his conducting, his justice toward all, his unmistakable artistry and ability, still he could not down the rumors spread by the scandal mongers. The open opponents of the King's choice were outspoken in their hatred. They spread the most unsavory of reputations for the edification of the public and the other musicians. He was a libertine. He was given to the utmost excesses when it came to the matter of women. He was easily swayed by impulse, he could not be depended upon for any degree of stability. . . . This is what was said of him. The stories of his episode with the unwholesome Gretchen for whom he wrote an opera "Sylvana" were told to those who listened with sparkling eyes and holy protest. The accounts of his connection with the libidinous circle of men and women who styled themselves "Faust's Descent into Hell," the orgies in which he took a prominent part, the outrages upon common convention and decency—these were all spread lavishly. Weber heard the stories as they were whispered, felt the insulting glances upon him when he passed through the streets or attended the receptions. The campaign was of a sort which he could not combat. Indeed he might not have denied the libels if he chose. They were true!

If he had been able to forget the past and live simply in the future, attending to his duties without recourse to his former habits, everything might have been well for him. But instead Weber went right headlong into more trouble.

Scandals anew broke out. The local folks had opportunity to see in their own midst repetitions of the earlier amours, to see Weber's impossible character. First the musicians pointed to Weber's bad judgment. Placed in a position with supreme power thrust upon him, he could make or break celebrities of the day. Imagine his ridiculous audacity in producing in the repertoire a composition known as "Fidelio" by a stupid deaf fellow named Beethoven. His foolishness in this regard was quickly made plain to him by the failure of the piece.

But this was as nothing compared to his private life. Morality at the Dresden Opera House was a thing more known in the breach than the observance, yet the worst sinners and offenders were the first to point the finger of scorn at the next romance. Weber's conduct was no worse than that of everybody else, but being the director, he was singled out for condemnation.

It was the talk of the town, the way he had fallen into a mess with the notorious Theresa Brunetti. She had made him the laughing-stock of the town. Just one of the common dancers, it was admitted that she had "used" the director to win favor for herself and her husband. Oh, yes, she was married,

and her honorable spouse laughed up his sleeve and pocketed his extra salaries. Brunetti had seen how affairs were going and had thrown open his house for Weber to live there. Brunetti was a coarse brute of a man, shouting, swearing, vulgar. The Brunetti, that is Theresa, was the mother of several children, but still youthful, fiery, voluptuous, and alluring. From whomever she felt she could win favor, money, jewels, entertainment, upon him she would cast her eyes, and she was the kind of woman before whom few were strong.

When Weber's appointment was announced, every woman at the opera house pictured how he might look; when he arrived, many were disappointed but few were disheartened, and each was hopeful that his particular fancy might alight on her in some degree. But Brunetti was determined that he should be her game! And it did not take long before Carl Maria von Weber was conscious that a pair of great, liquid eyes were cast longingly in his direction. It was not long before the sinuous, snake-like body of the Brunetti inflamed his dreams and aroused in his sentimental nature the most beautiful of pictures. He never saw the brutal and bestial vulgarity of her genuine self. He did not sense at first that he was merely the latest prize, that tomorrow he would be cast off perhaps, when another offered larger values. He felt strangely uncomfortable before the husband of Brunetti, until he had gone before him and confessed his love for the wife.

Ah, how the precious pair laughed after Weber was gone.

The young conductor listened to the scandal, heard the whirlpools of slander, accusations and intrigue about his ears. He was infatuated with the woman. He was thoroughly within her spell, in a web from which he could not extricate himself.

Weber had come to Dresden with grand ideals. He had in his heart to make the finest of artistic successes. He had planned to write a new kind of opera. He had determined that nothing could make him return to his earlier weaknesses and vices. But this woman, the Brunetti, had taken all of the finest dreams out of his head, and had made of him a puppet, dancing attendance upon her. How foolish and unmanly he had become was to be seen in his utter lack of independence. It was not many months after Brunetti had succumbed to Weber's pleadings —how foolish is the man who thinks Brunettis succumb!—that she had treated him with contempt. She taunted him, flung insults at him, openly made love to other men before his eyes, and when he was in torture, suffering the pangs of injured love, she would call him to her with the bend of a finger and the flick of an eyelash and draw him to his knees, when she pursed her lips to him again. Who could understand such a woman as Theresa? One minute Carl felt as if he must kill her and end it all, and the next moment, when she touched him, he was

weeping to think he had ever dreamed of hurting her.

Think of Carl Maria von Weber, dragging himself to his morning rehearsal, after a night of the most heartrending experiences. All night he had sat in a corner at the Brunetti's house, weeping as he watched Theresa leaving the house on the arm of another man, watching through the agonizing hours, until she returned and then begging her to tell him if she was through, listening to a coarse laugh and then taking with eager hunger the kiss she condescended to fling him. Think of him, at the desk, trying to direct, rehearse, compose, live, with a leech like that at his heart.

See him—tall, thin, slightly stooping, his sensitive face ghastly pale, the slender, long nose, the large, beautiful eyes, the curving, pouting lips, the strong chin, the unruly hair, the long fingers of his artistic hands—see him at the morning rehearsal.

Half way through the performance, a man came to Weber with a message:

"There's a lady here, Miss Brandt, says you asked her to call this morning."

"Yes, ask her to wait. . . . No, I'll come in now. Ladies and gentlemen: Just rest a few minutes until I return. Better go over that last duo with the piano. Come, Miss Brandt. You write me you are free for engagements. Well, I don't know just what we can promise. But I remember how well you sang in the soprano rôle of my "Sylvana." It was in

Frankfort, at the opening performance we had an empty house, you recall?"

"Indeed I do," Miss Brandt blushed, "we were competing with a balloon ascension that day, and most of the people preferred the balloon to "Sylvana."

"I am going to give you a contract, Miss Brandt," Weber said, decisively, "and I'm going to do the best I can with you."

When Caroline Brandt had first written him, another impulse had suggested his sending for her at once, and had urged him to this peremptory signing of a contract, without really knowing what he was going to do with her. He remembered her at Frankfort, in the days of his episode with Gretchen. Compared to that little viper, Gretchen, this girl had been all sweet simplicity and tender beauty. Her character was in such marked contrast to all the intrigue and evil of the opera house. Weber remembered how sweetly she appealed to him then, and how he had been unable to think of her in the same terms as Gretchen and that group of low women.

Here again, the first view of Caroline Brandt had brought a refreshing breath of life to Carl Maria von Weber, and he returned to the rehearsal with a new vigor.

And it did not take long for Carl to realize that he had always loved this different girl, not with a lust, not with a physical infatuation, but as a husband for a wife. . . . Then it can be understood

that he lost no time in placing Caroline in a rôle at the opera house.

The Brunetti always watched the new woman. She had no intention of losing her prize. A new woman was either a rival or a friend. Theresa Brunetti instantly introduced the newcomer to all the habitues and stage-door sycophants. The newcomers generally were eternally grateful to the dancer, and besides they were placed in such a way that they did not interfere with Brunetti's prizes. In the natural course of events, Brunetti made up to Caroline Brandt, who showed no inclination to accept of the kind of hospitality which was planned for her. Instantly antagonism sprang up between the two. That is to say, Theresa Brunetti was at war.

With the intuition of the feline, Theresa realized that her prize had fallen in love with Brandt. From that moment, Theresa was all attention. She was supremely affectionate, refused all invitations, told Weber that she could not bear to be out of his sight. She used all the wiles of her sex upon the unsuspecting man. He was taken off his feet by her wooing. It was subtle, oriental, irresistible in its physical lure.

Weber had designated Caroline Brandt for the leading soprano rôle in his new opera. Rehearsals were in progress. Brunetti never left his side. She was purring to him, smoothing his hand, administering to his needs. When she was alone with Carl,

when he was melting in her caresses, she would croon that he did not love her, that this new woman was taking him from her, that this new woman was this and that and the other thing. . . . Once when Carl, fainting with the mad joy of Brunetti, was telling her of his undying affection, she suddenly jumped to her feet and asked for a test—he must get rid of that Brandt woman.

Against all his better impulses, against his real desires, Carl now turned upon Caroline, treating her with cruelty and tyranny. The girl could not understand and the director himself felt miserable, as he rebuked her constantly for errors she never committed.

"Tell her that dress is a sight," Brunetti would whisper. "Tell her that the way she's going on with the stage carpenter is a disgrace. Tell her—tell her—tell her. . . ."

"Remember, Carl, my love," she crooned as she smoothed Weber's forehead, "you get rid of her or you get rid of me."

At rehearsal one morning, with Theresa still at his side, filling him with venom every step of the way, Caroline appeared. She sang. She faltered, perhaps unconsciously aware of the plot to eliminate her, perhaps because of something she dared not confess, a disappointment in the man she—loved. She sang. She faltered. Von Weber, with the dagger-eyes of Brunetti at him "Now, now," rose and shouted:

"Miss Brandt. You are singing miserably. You are worthless. The contract is broken. We must get another to fill this rôle."

Caroline stood aghast, turned deathly pale, half swooning and fell across a bundle, hitting her head against a pile. She shrieked. All ran to help her. All but Carl and Theresa. Meantime Caroline was taken home unconscious and word was passed that she was deathly sick.

Now came a reaction. The Brunetti's trick proved a boomerang. Relieved of Brandt, she made a great error. She took up with the banker from Prague too soon, or soon enough, I should say, to open von Weber's eyes. He saw Brunetti laughing at him, and pictured the simple girl, Caroline, lying in bed. Over him there came an instantaneous reaction. He was through forever with Brunetti and all of her kind. Like a penitent child he sought the forgiveness of Caroline. He begged permission to see her. The mother refused. The doors were barred to him, but love will have its way. Caroline herself knew and returned the devotion of the composer. That day she faltered from the stage she loved Carl more dearly than ever. She saw in the thin, emaciated body of the man, the great soul striving for utterance. The lame leg he dragged after him, aroused a wealth of sympathy in her bosom. The pale noble face with the high projecting cheek bones proclaiming the disease which ravaged his lungs, only made her feel a divine devotion for him; and if she had

been less of a true woman, she would have told him so.

But being a woman of the older standards, she pretended to be irrevocably angry at his conduct. She said she was through with Dresden and the opera. She would never go there again. As soon as she could leave her bed, she would be away.

"But can I not induce you to stay . . . and let me expiate my sin to you?" Weber pleaded.

"I stay? With you? Why?"

The mother of Caroline Brandt sat in the rocker, watching the man. He looked at her, then leaning over the bed, whispered:

"Why? Caroline, because I love you."

Her manner was, "How dare you!" But her eyes answered him, "And I love you." But her words: "Mother dear, will you let me talk over our business with Mr. Weber—there's a dear."

Mrs. Brandt rose, hesitated and then left, rather annoyed. There was a dead silence.

"Caroline, I know that I am the most cruel of men, the most idiotic and stupid. I have acted like a cad, like a crazy man. I never realized the truth —since back there in Frankfort. Caroline, I will show you I am sincere in my word. I love you—I want you to be my wife."

"Your wife—wife! I your wife? . . . But that Brunetti woman? What of her?"

"That is dead. I could not help it. Caroline, I have been the dupe of circumstances. I am not

really a bad man. To live at home with you as my companion that is what I am intended for. Really. I have been a fool—yes, the dupe of circumstances."

"Circumstances? Are you no stronger than that," Caroline insisted, pretending to be adamant, when her heart was in a flutter of joy. "Circumstances. Where's your will? Have you no strength of will?"

"Caroline, we are only creatures of circumstances. Think, if you please, what I have gone through. The start I had. Are you strong enough to listen? May I tell you about my life up to now, that you may know me for the vices and the virtues I combine.

"I may tell you? Well, it started in my father —the vices principally. I know that's not a nice way to speak of one's parent, and I love him in a way. Some day he'll turn up again, and you'll see him. He was handsome, penniless, and idle. He was in the army, and he played the violin, and he married a woman of fair income, and he lived mainly on the income she provided and the money his wit could gather. His sister, my aunt Constance, married the immortal Mozart. That put an idea in my father's mind. From then on, he was determined to have a son who should travel about, a famous prodigy, like Mozart, and his father. The way in which Mozart's father had become independent and famous was the way my father planned to become affluent. . . . But his sons were neither gifted nor talented, neither interested in music or other arts. Then his wife died, and father began to look about

for a second. He met my mother. A pretty, sixteen-year-old daughter of a wealthy man, she was sick of consumption, worried to death and in eternal hysterics by her husband's misdeeds and petty scheming.

" 'Another Mozart I want, another Mozart,' my father raged. I was to be that person. He had me carried here and there, studying and playing—and I could scarcely walk. My poor sick mother traveled with us—the Weber Musicians. If Mozart had great acclaim, I am afraid I did not make much of a hit. My mother's disease was in my bones, in my hip here. Do not shudder. It does not hurt me, only at times. We traveled, I became an expert pianist, I wrote some immature compositions. The life of the theater delighted my father, who taught me the ways of women—it sickened me. . . . And my mother, whose wealth had been squandered, whose health had been dissipated, could stand it no longer. I was twelve when she died.

"By the time I was eighteen, I was a rake. I lived in caroling, kissing, drinking Vienna, myself drinking, kissing, caroling. My teacher, Abt Vogler, procured me a place at the theater, but my indiscretions lost me my place, as it may have already lost me this place. . . . But no, not now. You have saved me. . . . We next moved to Württemberg, the smooth tongue of my father won the dissolute King, and we settled there as the favorites. I was appointed secretary to the Prince Ludwig. How I

abhorred him. You cannot imagine, Caroline, what he was like, and how I suffered. He was so tremendously stout that in order to get near enough to his food to eat it, he had the table cut in a semicircular form, and he squeezed into it. He stammered, talked the vilest language, was always without money, and made me do his begging with the King. The King was even viler than the Prince, more dissolute. I would pass the gates bareheaded (so the King ordered all his retainers and subjects to do) and I would pass into the palace ashamed to be living. I soon came into trouble with the King. I talked back to him, which was against all precedent. We were arrested, my father and I, thrown into prison for a time and then after a mock trial, exiled from the country."

"Exiled! It was the best thing that could have happened," echoed the girl from the bed.

"But before I left I played a trick on the King. He hated old people. Why they had such a morbid effect upon him I could never figure. One day, an old woman came to me, and wished to know where the Royal Washerwoman was. I led her to the private parlors of the King, and told her that the Royal Washerwoman was inside—the man on the chair. The King was wild with anger; his vanity was crushed.

"At that time, from my father, the King, the Prince, and the opera folk, and from my own experiences, I was taught to believe that women are good

for nothing . . . and I would have died believing that if it had not been for you."

"Oh, von Weber, you are in just another of your sentimental moods. . . . I cannot believe you. How can I?" the happy Caroline murmured.

"Caroline, this is different. I know it. If you will help me to find my better self. Will you? Will you . . . I have an opera in my desk. I call it "The Free-Shooter." It is revolutionary. I use music combined with real drama—I make the music mean definite things all the way. It has been dinning in my head for years. I would like you to create the rôle of the soprano. I should like you to be my gallery. I should love you to be my wife."

Caroline took his hand and looked straight at him without a word. It came to her that this gaunt man, boyish, impulsive, was a genius of the first order, a pioneer in music, misunderstood, berated, but a leader of men. She could not know that what he was then conceiving in the "Freischütz" and "Oberon" and "Euryanthe" was the prelude to Wagnerian ideas, really the founding of German opera as it is known to-day. She could not dream that what later was to be known as the *leit-motif* in music was his creation, that Wagner and all the others were to acknowledge their debt to this strange, sentimental, misunderstood man, this victim of circumstances, this voice and instrument of never-ceasing melody and harmony.

But it came to her that it was destined that she

was to be for him a wife, an inspiration, a sincere critic, and a companion.

Brunetti at the opera-house laughed. Weber returned to his desk and was silent, but a smile was in his soul, for Caroline Brandt had promised to marry him and life at last took on a sunny dazzle of hope.

. . . . . .

Afterward: The reader will be happy to know that Caroline did marry Carl Maria von Weber, that she was his finest guide and critic, that they lived happily for ten years and were blessed with children.

The end of his life was almost as sad as the beginning. He had been called to London to direct "Oberon." He was so sick with his mother's illness that he could hardly walk; he coughed incessantly and was the shadow of a man. In this terrible condition he left his family that he might provide them with some money after his death, which he knew to be imminent. But he made so little, even at his benefit concert, that the trip to London was a loss. He tried to return to his dear Caroline, but death took him suddenly. His last words were: "Now let me sleep." Years later the body of Weber was returned from London to Dresden, honored by all.

Weber's important works are: "Der Freischütz," "Euryanthe," "Oberon," "Das Waldmächen," "Peter Schmoll und seine Nachbarn," "Silvan," "Abu Hassan," "Natur und Liebe," "Invitation to the Dance," "Last Waltz,"

"Die Drei Pintos," "In seiner Ordnung schaff der Herr," "Jubel Overture."

Books about the composer: Biography by Barbedette; Biography by Otto Jahn; Biography by the Baron Max Maria von Weber (the composer's son); letters from the composer to his wife, published by his grandson, Carl von Weber.

XXIX

FACE TO FACE WITH M. N. I.

1852–1918

M. N. I. was laid away to rest last June.[1] It was the twentieth day of the month when he closed his eyes and two days later they carried him away. I did not weep. I did not cry. On his face was the same smile which I had always watched for in the moments when he made music. Thus I was convinced there was much music about him, music of a different sort than mortal ears could understand. Just before they sealed him in his everlasting home, I put a lily on his breast, and when no one could see me, I put his card in his pocket. I wanted that there be no doubt that he was a maker of music. During those two days when he lay there so calmly and peacefully, I was half tempted to give him his violin to carry off for company. But the violin said, "No, I will stay behind and sing his praises as long as I am whole."

How strange, I thought, as he lay there all silent,

[1] This was written in December of 1918.

that only yesterday he stood on that very spot and held the eloquent violin under his chin while his bow sang out in rich-toned accents. I opened the box of the instrument he loved most of all, the Villaume of France, which he had always said, was alive and readier to play than to remain silent. When I tried to pick it up, the string broke; it startled me, but when I glanced over at him, there was that smile. So I wrapped it up carefully as he always did, and put it away.

The music lay there in its accustomed place, kept so lovingly, the masterpieces for the violin by Spohr, Viotti, Mendelssohn, Tartini, Kreutzer, deBeriot, Vieuxtemps, and many others. There were Bach and Corelli and David. I opened the Kreutzer studies. That number two,—I could hear it singing out and in the dimmed light I could have sworn the violinist was playing it. That smile—perhaps he was.

The last day, when morning came, the smile had broadened. The friends would be coming, the room must be cleaned, the music room must be brightened. And I took the broom and swept the floor and took the dust rag and cleaned the chairs and the violin boxes and the music stands. This was good, my doing this; I who detested such work. He would surely have a good old laugh on me for this, and, sure enough, there he was very much amused.

When the minister came, I tried to tell him what he ought to say. It was hard for him to understand

that M. N. I. wanted no weeping and sorrowful message. A man who gives his life to music cannot permit unhappiness to come to those he loves most. The minister tried his best, but he missed his opportunity completely. Perhaps that was because he had never known M. N. I.

I had not known him always, just a part of his life. With me, the first recollections of him, were when I was a little fellow, golden curls down my back, I have been told, and he would take me in his arms, or lean over me as I looked at my picture book, shake my head playfully until I screamed in annoyance at the interruption; or, when at night, when darkness peopled every corner with goblins and creatures of dreadful import, he would sit beside my bed and hold my little hand until gracious sleep shut off the darkness and made it light once more.

It was wonderful always when he played his violin. Especially with the old masters, such as Bach and Corelli. They seemed just to suit him. He always returned to them, and played with such simplicity and dignity, each note proudly presenting itself as a true master. As the years went on, I could compare his playing with others that I heard, and rarely did the other playing seem half so rich and beautiful. Where did he play? Why did he not stand on platforms with the master virtuosi?

I never asked the questions, but I thought them. But the answer came with the unfolding of the years.

He carried so many burdens on his back, that with the effort to carry them, he forgot about himself and his own glories. This makes me wonder about heroism and what the true hero is like. Does he fly into the face of danger, over the top in trenches, into the blazing flame, before the onrushing train? Is he only in the midst of welcoming crowds, greeted with flying flags and cheering multitudes? Or does he sometimes stay at home, fighting forever with the elements of fate, relinquishing his own hold on glory and wealth that he may do his simple, daily duties?

I never noticed that he was not like other men in the build of him until one day a cad on the streets shouted out a nasty word. I did not understand it, child that I was, but I could see that the word cut deep. And never in all the days of our intercourse did the subject once come up for discussion. His sister told me one day how he came to be that way.

He was a beautiful child, so wonderfully built, that every one turned to look at him and give praise to him. An old Jewish woman said that all this praise would bewitch the child; indeed one day he fell and broke his back! Yet he stood erect, his head high and proud.

The first day I took my violin lesson! I see it now. A tiny instrument had been made for me. I learned to play very rapidly. I was six, and by the time that I was eight, how proud he was of me!

"You are beating me," he would chuckle. "I

was fourteen when I took my first lessons from my cousin. Very weak and tiny I was, but how I loved it. At sixteen I gave my first recital. And here you are at eight as good as I was then. Look at this old program. Master, not Mister I was then. But they did think I was good—the critics wrote of my unprecedented *genius*. Think of that," and he chuckled.

"Pretty soon I was known all over our city. The little prodigy was wanted to play. He was a great favorite. Then the great teacher, Jacobson, took me under his guidance, and in another year, he had made me his assistant teacher.

"Now came the time when I went from city to city in recital. I was on the fair road to a very famous name, when I went and married, and my darling children came to make life happier. I had had my ambition centered on the fame of my uncle Barney, who was the greatest violinist in England. Uncle Barney was the favorite artist of Queen Victoria; he wrote and directed the music at her wedding to the Prince Consort, Prince Albert. He directed for all the famous stars. They always told me about Uncle Barney. He was always my star. But I was going ahead of even him! I planned to far outdistance Uncle Barney, but I married, I had our children and I decided to settle down to a nice local career."

Very simply told, isn't it? But it wasn't so simply done, the setting aside of the great expecta-

tions, to follow a nice local career. What of his heart and the dreams turned to ashes? Was there any regret? Instead of the world, a little local career.

M. N. I. became the joy of the home city. To him traveled all the local aspirants to violinistic fame. Many took their first lessons there in the little home, who went later to study in Europe. Joachim, the master of masters, way off in Europe developed a decided admiration for M. N. I. way off in America; for whenever a pupil came from one to the other, there was nothing to undo; real training for a foundation had been given.

Whenever there was a musicale or an affair where music was wanted, it was, "Ask M. N. I." Simple, very modest—a little sign at the window, engagements for home and theaters; but when he was alone, he delighted in Bach and Viotti and Corelli and Spohr—playing with a tone that was magnificent and pure.

In the theaters and the private musicales, M. N. I. fought for the better music. He held an innate hatred for all music which degraded taste. He never permitted cheap numbers on the tiniest of his programs. Such pleasure he took in making up his programs, building a real climax, introducing some forgotten masterpiece, playing a solo of the older classics. He invited his best friends to play at home —in quartettes and trios and quintettes. Music was his life—it seemed so cruel to commercialize it!

I think of the celebrated artists traveling over countries, reaching millions with their recitals and I wonder if any of them have ever gone to the peculiar ends of M. N. I. and perhaps some others like him, to spread real happiness with their art.

A gathering of half a hundred at a reception, maybe; and what pains he would go to, in order to use his music to its last power to make those people happy, administering it, I was going to say, to each individual with infinite care in order that each might retain the benefits. . . . I can see him as he used to look. Always immaculately clean, his fine, frank face beaming with an intense love. In speaking about his ideas to his fellow musicians, in explaining some effects he desired, he would gesticulate emphatically—his long, slender, delicate hands being lifted, the first finger pointing. He would wet his lips from time to time and he would grow quite eloquent. But he would be a little fearful and embarrassed as he finished. His hair was glossy and silken and his face clean-shaven. His eyes were large, his nose long, his lips full.

Once in a while he escaped from the local bounds, and jumped into the larger arena of activities. For instance, when he arranged the music for President Harrison at the big naval regatta. Or when he joined in the Jubilee recognition to the composer Strauss, or when he aided Sousa in his big concerts, or Gilmore in his; or when he built the orchestra for Parepa-Rosa, the opera star, or arranged the pro-

grams for Henry Savage's road companies, or Margaret Mather's Shakespearian tours. Then, how his wonderful understanding made itself felt. How Mrs. Pat Campbell marveled at his quaint music for the terrible "Electra," how Ben Greet stood in raptures for his arrangement of the music of "The Midsummer Night's Dream," how Adelina Patti appreciated his keen insight into affairs—and how she learned to rely on his word concerning the authenticity of her violins.

But these events were merely sidelights on the real career, the career of the honest, sincere development of his little world. To give joy with music, what finer life than this? What is accomplishment if not in the close application of it? What of the artists who sway multitudes who could not hold the little group of innocents? For me, I ask that I be judged as M. N. I. will be remembered; not for his popular acclaim, but for his sweet adoration of art and beauty in its application to the lesser, the more intimate circles. Is there not a Beethoven spirit in the love of M. N. I. for his art, irrespective of its publicity and its rewards in dross? Often times I feel ashamed that I can work so little at the thing I love, though none there be to listen or applaud!

I watched him, then, as I cleaned up the music room, with him smiling most joyously. I recalled the many days, when sick in bed, he called me to his side that I might take my lessons. On other nights, how painful it was, when he dragged himself

out of his bed, to go out into the cold and sleepy night to his engagements.

"It would never do to disappoint them. I will feel better when I start to play. The people must be happy, and if I did not go, the music would not be right."

That is how he would excuse himself, as he dragged his leg along, the hip giving terrible pain, his violin held securely under his arm, and his cane feeling its way on the slippery street.

Yes, I thought, as I looked on him again, there are more heroes than those whose names appear in battle story.

Those last few months, they come back to me now. I see him as he walked to the park and smiled at the little children and cheered the growing grasses and flowers, and invited strange old men and women to listen to him in the music room as he played for them. I see him as he prayed for peace during all his suffering, praying for the end of slaughter, praying for the rest of the world, while he forgot himself. I see him always with the violin, always living with his art, living with Bach and Corelli, and Kreutzer and Spohr. I see him walking to the home of his friend the painter, Warren Sheppard, playing for him as he put ships and oceans on the canvas. I see him carrying his violin that he might discover another bit of Beethoven sonata with his friend, the pianist. And I see him in the very last trip of all! It was made to hear music. He heard his concert,

he left it satisfied, and as he waited for a car, he was knocked down. Half conscious they carried him home, and he went to bed, and he sank away, heroic to the last, sorrowing that he could no longer play the violin: "My fingers are getting so stiff that I couldn't play a note. No, I couldn't play a scale or the simplest exercise. Poor Bach and Corelli and Kreutzer and Spohr."

Sometimes in the moments of delirium, "I am the director here. This is my orchestra. I will decide what music shall be played. I will not permit that cheap stuff to be heard. What will happen to the people? There is war, over in Europe. It must be beautiful music, only beautiful music, that is how I pray for peace, in all my suffering, with beautiful music."

So when he closed his eyes and the smile of his playing moments came on him, I could not be a craven sort and weep. But at the very last instant I put his card into his pocket when nobody was looking. For I wanted that there be no doubt that he was a maker of music. The card read: "Mark N. Isaacson, violinist," and I had written on it: "Dear Father, good-by in happy melody."

XXX

FACE TO FACE WITH MOZART

1756–1791

"GUIDE, will you show us where Mozart lies?" we asked, and the beggar who dogs the footsteps of all who visit St. Mary's Cemetery in Berlin nodded his head, held out his hand for the coin, and totteringly led us forward a few steps. Then he stopped, and with palsied gestures, rubbed his hands together.

"Can't just point out the grave exactly," he muttered, "nobody knows just which it is. He's over in the common grounds. Some say it's in the first acre, some say it's the farther one. But it's with the other paupers—way down there. It's a long way and I've got to think hard——"

We dropped a larger coin in his hand, which seemed to stimulate his memory, for he nodded with more satisfaction, moved a little faster, and talked as he went forward threading a path in and out between the gravestones.

"Yes, over there with the beggars; they put him

on top of two others in the same grave the day they buried him. The funeral wagon had him in the plain pine box. Says the driver: 'Who's this one?' Says his companion, 'Sort of a bandmaster.' At that says the first one, 'Them's the poorest of all. We get nothin' extra. Better luck next time. In he goes.' Ha, ha. Think of that. It was a bad night. Ugh, the worst kind of a night. Black storm—like the sort of rain we've been expecting all day. Getting closer now, isn't it?"

The guide stopped. He lifted his head from its downward expression, and painfully directed his gaze to the clouds.

"That storm's pretty close. Well, let's go ahead. As I was saying, they buried him in the awful blackness of the storm, lightnin' and thunder, and the gravesmen swearing at him for bringing them out in such weather. And none around to do him the last politeness of shedding a tear or making a prayer for his soul. None. They do say as how a couple of the other musical men did start out, but turned back when it threatened——"

A clap of thunder made unintelligible the end of the sentence.

"Ah. Just such a night as this is going to be. Only the gravesmen knew where he lies, and they forgot. Uh-huh, and now you know all about it. I —I——"

Again the thunder, then a dazzling shoot of lightning and in an instant the heavy drops began to

fall. In another instant the world was as black as night, with the wind whistling like the voices of all the murdered dead. Through the hurricane's roar, we could hear the beggar:

"I'm afraid. I'm afraid. It was just such a night as this, that they left him to be buried without friend or mark of God's ceremony. Lord, have mercy, I'm afraid——"

We clutched each other's hands and drew closely as the rain pelted down upon us, as the thunder echoed over the tombs, and the lightning occasionally illumined the pale faces of the head-stones. Panic came upon us, for we knew not which way to turn, and we stood stock-still, petrified with our fear, murmuring imprecations upon the villain guide for leaving us in such a predicament.

"Look!" said my companion. "Look—there's a light. He must be coming back."

A light? It was coming towards us. We looked harder. The light—was—a man! No, not a man but something white and luminous itself. We drew back, our bodies plastered together, our hearts still as if death had come upon us.

The figure advanced, the hands extended as if in benediction.

"Why—why, we know that face. From the pictures. It's Mozart!"

Mozart? Had our frightened imaginations conjured up the sight, or—had we met—a ghost? It was a sad, somewhat handsome face, great bulk of

powdered wig, whimsical smile—a ghost, a ghost indeed, but withal a kindly ghost. For there was that in the way he motioned and nodded that indicated clearly he meant no harm. He seemed to be saying, "I come to meet you, greet you—not beat you. Come, come, be not afraid."

"Come, come," he did actually say, "you made this journey to see my grave. What matters that? Here I am myself, quite returned to the form I was before I came. It's all quite gone. Sometimes I myself—I myself forget the grave. They have me in there with a midwife and an idiot. Ha, what matters it? Come, make yourself comfortable. Be not afraid. Sit down here."

Now, it may sound very strange to recount so unbelievable an adventure; but in reality we soon found ourselves at our ease. The manner of the apparition was most quieting, and we completely lost that sense of embarrassment and discomfort which are said to be common to humans in such company.

The storm had exhausted itself. The wind had died down. The thunder had scarcely a whisper of vague rumbling left to recall the giant roar. In the wake of the storm had succeeded blackest darkness. Outlined against the sky, as clearly as you can imagine, he stood for all the world the very picture of the Mozart of our books, a young, short man scarcely beyond the boyhood age.

"Forget my grave," he pleaded, "forget my miserable end, forget every one that forsook me, even

my wife, my friends, my people. I know a secret. It was never meant for me to live to become a man. I have thought it all out.

"I was the wonder child of music. Look here. When I was not quite three years old, I climbed up to the harpsichord and did play harmonies. My father had been a musician, doing very nicely. My papa was a good player. My sister, who was five years older than her little brother Wolfgang, myself, was learning to play, and I showed her. Immediately my father recognized his son, and after that he always spoke (behind my back, of course) of the 'great Wolfgang.' I could never tell you how it was that such a musical understanding came to me. I never really worked hard. I suppose it was in me. Then my father laid down his life for me, and gave up his own career to make mine. The same with my mother and my sister, and with all the kings and dukes and princes and bishops around me. Oh, the things I did as a little infant, not seven years old. I would go before the Emperor and make him marvel. I would stretch a piece of cloth over the keys of the instrument and play perfectly through it. When we would come to the customs officers in our travels, I would take out my violin and make them listen and let us go by without the regular worries.

"Ha, I would go around at seven in my gay costume and sword. Knighted by the Pope and made noble by kings. Oh, how we traveled. There was

Nannerle, my sister, and my father and I. They kept me so carefully; but always I went from one illness to another, although I was a healthy child. The travel did it, I guess. Once, I was blind for nine days; another time I got the smallpox. Another time I had fevers. But I was healthy. That I was. Remember what I had to do. Never before had anything like the wonder child Mozart been known. In Germany, France, England, they flocked to me, that they might be able to say they had seen me. At a dinner, an old cardinal turned to me and said, 'Are you the famous boy they are all writing about?' And then he took me in his arms and said he was happier to know me, hah, than if I had been the greatest king in Europe."

We listened spellbound.

"There was I at ten, writing to order symphonies for orchestras. Said I to my sister, 'Nan, always remind me to give the French horns plenty to do—they need it.' Sometimes, when I was writing I would play jokes, make imitations of hornpipes and burlesques on popular airs. And there was the opera 'Bastienne.' I was all of twelve years old when I wrote that, and it was performed. I think I was about thirteen when I first conducted an orchestra. It seemed funny at first. But it was a lot of fun. Oh, there's the thing, it was all such a lot of fun.

"My father would watch me; once he was almost killed protecting me. I was the greatest thing or person in the world. My father didn't think I

should be one of the seven wonders of the world. Indeed, he thought I was the *first*. How I smile when I think back—what a little child I was with my games and my jokes.

"It's funny for me to be standing here a ghost, isn't it? I, Wolfgang Amade Mozart, perennial child of music?" and thereupon he laughed aloud.

"Why, it was only yesterday that I was romping about, foolish as a lamb and as simple. 'Wolfgang, have a little dignity, please. Remember how the people think of you.' Ha, ha. Dignity, what's that?" and the spirit before us actually danced and jigged and made the most curious sounds like this: "Schnip, schnap, schnei"—and other funny syllables without meaning.

"You're wondering about that? Those words mean nothing. I used to string together rhyming syllables even when—well, when I seemed to have grown up." And as Mozart spoke of the growing up, his voice grew sadder. "No, I'd just string them together, schnip, schnap, schnei. I'd write to my cousin as dearest, best, lovingest, fairest, etc., etc., and signed myself 'your cos-boz.' To my mother I would write, 'I send you 1,056,789,555 kisses. Now count them out and remember me.' Believe me, friends, in those days I had my fun and my little jokes, fun of my own sort. I used to go singing and laughing about. I'd laugh at almost anything. Tell me a joke, and I'd always be a good listener. I used to have a lot of fun teasing people, and the

girls—oh me, oh my, the girls! If I had married all the girls I teased and promised, I'd have been married a hundred thousand times. Ha, from the earliest days, I had my fun—what you call puppy love, maybe, huh? When I was seven years old and playing the clavichord at the French Court, and all the nobles and courtiers were around, the King and Queen overjoyed, I did jump to my feet and over into the Queen's lap, as she sat right on the throne. I kissed her and I said, 'You are very good and I love you, and I will let you marry yourself to me.' Of course she smiled and kissed me, and whenever after that any one should even hesitate to kiss me, I would say, 'Remember, the Queen kissed me, and who are you to refuse?' It always worked.

"How I remember those days. How impetuous a boy I was. In Austria, the Emperor had some ambitions to write music. I was asked to play it. Can you think of me, aged eight, saying in my pipy voice to the Emperor, "If I am to play the concerto by you, you must turn the pages for me'—and the Emperor obeying?"

We hoped he would never stop. He paused and took a breath.

"There were, I remember, two big generals, who laughed at me and showed me their medals. Here is what I said. I said, 'It would be easier for me to get in one year all the decorations that you could possibly receive than for you to become what I am

now, if you died and were born twice over.' That took courage, but I would have my little fun.

"And then, I was always in love—in a boyish way. If I didn't have some one near me, some one I loved, I couldn't compose. I would write my sister: 'Dearest sister, I kiss your hand a thousand times—and have a great deal to say to you.' Yes, that was to my sister; but I was always in love. . . . Now, don't misunderstand me, young people, my love was not like that of my Don Juan. I looked on woman as I would on a beautiful canvas, or a beautiful statue. And it did me good to know that people cared for me. Some one once said: 'Mozart, your music seems to be declaring a proposal always'—and that fellow guessed my secret. I am always proposing to my listeners. That is why you will always see lovers seek refuge with me. I am their friend.

"There was once, when I was about ten, an Austrian princess. I said to her, 'Do you love me?' and she teasingly said, 'No.' I cried. Even after that, it seems, I cried if any one followed her example.

"But, young friends, I do not want you to get a wrong idea. I loved—but my greatest joy was creating music. The beating of my heart is announced by octaves on the violin. The trembling irresolution is expressed by the crescendos, and the whisperings and sighs are given out by muted flutes and violins in unison. Music, with me, reigned like a king; indeed in all the world nothing else is so worth while;

and opera comes before everything else. And I am jealous of any one who writes an opera.

"I wrote operas. From my "Bastien and Bastienne," composed at twelve, to "The Marriage of Figaro," "The Magic Flute," and "Don Giovanni," I tried my hand many times.

"Now I will tell you my secret. Some people are born to be old, you know, some to be gay, and some to be sad. It is written in their fate, I know it. Some are written ever to be children, and nothing else. I don't mean that they mustn't grow up, although for some even that is to be the fate. I was never intended to grow up. I know it.

"See what happened when I tried to become a man?" and again the voice became saddened at the thought. "I was first of all then recognized as a competitor; and whereas in the beginning I had been a wonder child, now as a budding genius I was to be feared. Even at twelve, the musicians were fighting me. And when I became nineteen, well, I was just one of them, and one who, they said, had been overrated as an infant. They said I had been made famous through curiosity. Now they fought me. I suppose if I had been different than I was, I would have fought back. But what could I do?

"Now look, when I was a boy, I could kiss and be merry with the girls; but when I put on long trousers and a wig, I must needs be serious. Now it was rumored Mozart will marry her, or her, or

her. Ha. There was the drama of Aloysia, Aloysia Weber. Enter Aloysia, pretty—and I must needs marry her. My father took me aside and told me how foolish it was, and for the moment I took his advice. But I wanted to marry her. Exit Aloysia; she had not loved me for that. But there was her sister, Constance. She did love me. Well, there was only marriage; that's the grown-up thing to do. But how can children, who are always children, plan out matters of money and economy and take care of sicknesses and other things like that? I tried to put on grown-up airs, and my father was angry. He knew I was only a child, but he had forgotten that a child needs watching. He wouldn't talk to me after that. That was sad. And then when I had my own little children, a fat little fellow who was such a doll, I tried to be like a father. I loved them all, the boys and the two girls; but I was just one of them. I would romp around and play. I would joke with my wife, I would leave a note on her forehead as she lay sleeping: 'Be a good little wife and I will return in an hour.'

"Then I would sit down to my writing, and then I was the mouthpiece of the Muse. I never worked and struggled over my music. Take it for all its acknowledged superiority, I never did more than give voice to all the notes and harmonies and ideas which came to me. Of that I am certain; and I believe it to be a truth that the voice which gained so easy an entrance through me in my childhood

days is everywhere trying to come out, if you only give it a chance. With me, I had no theories, no older schooling, with the result that whatever I thought, I wrote down, without forcing or changing; and that is why it was pure, real, and sincere in its character.

"Yes, I wrote. But I did not know what to do in the politics of placing my music. I found myself a family man, with responsibilities and the need to meet power with fawning, stratagem with scheming, and I knew not how. A certain bishop demanding my servility, I refused it, and he demanded my discharge, for the which I was ordered to be kicked out bodily.

"I was just a little boy, trying to match wits with hard-headed, planning, plotting men who knew the tricks. I was a little boy carried on in the whirlpool of circumstances. I could not understand poverty. I spent what I had when I had it, and starved the other days. A child should not be subjected to such things.

"One day, near my last on earth, a stranger with a pale face came to my home. He wanted a Requiem for the Dead. He left an address where the music should be delivered, and he paid me something in advance. He left no name. . . . But he seemed so strange and uncanny to me, dressed in gray, pale and sad-eyed. I was sick, and I felt in my weakness that the Requiem had been ordered for me. I couldn't get that out of my mind. I was ordered

to write my own death music. And I died, with the music not quite finished.

"Foolish idea! But like so many of my notions, it sprang from a child's imagination, like a little fellow's bugaboo.

"So I have told you the secret. I was never meant to live over my childhood days. Don't mourn that I died so young, with years of fruitfulness in my days unfulfilled. That is not the truth. I was in my prime from infancy to maturity, and then I was simply a boy parading and masquerading over his time as a man. If I had lived, I do not know,—maybe I would have written much more, and good. But I should still have been the infant Mozart, playing at games and romping and scampering with little girls and emperors.

"And yet, I know what I have done. Do you think me overproud when I say that what I left for the world was the best I or any one else could have given? Or that I know that only once in an age does the voice of truth speak through a human as it did through me? As I look down over the years that have passed, the two centuries and more that have gone, I have watched a few honest souls give expression to what was at their hearts, but all too many have been forcing the lies and things that were but human creations—not of the world spirit.

"Ah, but hear me talk. Forgive me," and Mozart drew himself up to his full height of five feet two inches and looked upon us with an embracing

smile. "Forgive me. That was the voice of my pride, as it used to express itself in the moments of disappointment. Please do not remember me with ego upon my lips, with sorrow at my end. Please do not think of me with those morbid ideas connected with my last Requiem. . . . You have seen me in the gloom, but out of it you must remember you met the true spirit of Mozart in the little boy, the child of music. You must remember that I was gay. You must remember the spontaneity and earnestness and truth. I would not make people sad. I wanted always to make them feel the abandonment and unsuspecting innocence of my youth.

"These are my legacies. These are my gifts to mankind. Not in me did my genius begin and end. The voices of music which used me for their momentary doll mouthpiece are still alive. Ah, listen! As the various instruments mould, change, and modulate the tone, timbre, strength, and material so I expressed my message simply in my way.

"Ah, schnip, schnap, schnei. Dear world, dear world. Come and play with me. I am dancing, romping, gaming. Take this kiss to the world—you refuse, eh? Did not the Queen kiss me?" We reached out our hands to clasp his—and to draw the little fellow to us, but he grew smaller and smaller and smaller, until he was only a little boy, then a child, then an infant, and then—he was gone.

The stars were out. We moved away from the spot, now able to find our way, now no longer interested in the grave, no matter where it might be.

Hush! From the distance we could hear the trilling of the magic flute and the sound of childish laughter.

Mozart's greatest operas are: "The Magic Flute," "Don Giovanni," "Marriage of Figaro," "Bastien and Bastienne," "Thamos," and "Mithridates." His greatest orchestral works are: "Symphony in E," "Jupiter Symphony," and "Symphony in G Minor." His great instrumental and ensemble masterpieces are: "Ave Verum," "Mass in F," "The Reqieum," Six Violin Concertos, "Quartette in D Minor," and "Quintette in G Minor." In addition he wrote about six hundred other works.

Books about the composer: Otto Jahn's Biography; Gehring's "Mozart;" Nissen's "Life of Mozart;" Mozart's Letters.